هكذا من الاصل

WANTED: GIRL POWER IN THE BOARDROOM
Why big business needs more women
CITY+, WITH PAGES OF JOBS

RURAL IDYLL? YOU MUST BE JOKING
If you want village life, stay in the city
FEATURES, PAGE 16

SIR ELTON TELLS YOU WHAT TO DO WITH £5m
The answer's in Pandora's Box
COMMENT, PAGE 19

FOWLER'S CUP OF SORROW
World cup worry for Liverpool star
SPORT, PAGE 28

THE INDEPENDENT

Wednesday 25 February 1998 45p No 3,543

THE UNIVERSITY OF JORDAN SERIALS DIVISION

Unveiled: Blair's theme park for the Millennium

Inside the Millennium Dome 'Body Zone': the human figure, with an observation platform in the head, will be taller than the Statue of Liberty Computer image: Hayes Davidson

PM promises Greenwich extravaganza will be the envy of the world

By David Lister
Arts News Editor

IN LANGUAGE emotional and at times apocalyptic for what remains in essence a theme park, the Prime Minister yesterday unveiled some of the contents of the Millennium Dome.

They include a 79-ft high genderless body that visitors will enter via the waist and exit via the heel, a "floater-coaster" bed, on which to relax, a spiritual garden, in which to reflect, and a climactic show designed by the man behind the stadium extravaganzas of U2 and The Rolling Stones, in which to commune.

Though Mr Blair and Mr Mandelson were careful never to utter the words theme park, the Dome as outlined yesterday will have Disneyesque elements, promising a highly enjoyable day out with educational, spiritual and community aspects approached through rides, boats, moving pavements and cyberspace.

It will be, promised Mr Blair, "the envy of the world ... Picture the scene. The clock strikes midnight on 31 December 1999. The eyes of the world turn to a spot where the new millennium begins – the Meridian line at Greenwich. This is Britain's opportunity to greet the world with a celebration that is so bold, so beautiful, so inspiring that it embodies at once the spirit of confidence and adventure in Britain and the spirit of the future of the world."

Getting his aggro in first, Mr Blair castigated any doubters, placing them in an ignoble, unpatriotic and nihilistic tradition.

"It does not surprise me," he said, "that the cynics have rubbished the idea. They are in good company. They are part of an inglorious strand of British history: like those who said St Paul's would be a calamity, that the 1851 exhibition would have no visitors and that the 1951 Festival of Britain would never be finished on time.

"It's easy to say 'don't do something'. To say that it won't be done on time. That it costs too much. That no one will visit it. It takes little courage to say no to a new idea."

Unveiling models of the contents for around half of the zones, Mr Blair disclosed that businesses which have so far pledged their backing include Tesco, BSkyB, Manpower and BT. A sum of £75m has been raised so far, half of the sponsorship target.

The Dome will house:

- The Body Zone – "A voyage into the most fascinating and complex object in the world – the human body";
- Spirit Level – "A space for spiritual reflection that recognises the formative influence of Christianity in the Western world and the presence of other religious beliefs";
- Licensed to Skill and the Learning Curve – "The Learning Curve explores the classroom of the future while in Licensed to Skill, visitors will see how they meet the career challenges of the future";
- Dreamscape – "Visitors float along a river of dreams;
- Serious Play – "A moving pavement into the world of play with multi-media and a cinematic experience.
- Living Island – "Living Island takes visitors on a journey to a typical seaside resort – with surprises in store as the day trippers start to explore the difference they can make to our environment through everyday choices".

The attractions will be ranged in a circle around the performance area at the heart of the 20-acre space, which will feature a show designed by impresario Mark Fisher and rock star Peter Gabriel, with live performers and "stunning" visual effects repeated throughout each day.

While rock music and visual special effects will certainly feature, it remains unclear as to which other performing arts or symbols of British culture will find a home in the Dome.

Special report, pages 8 and 9
Leading article, page 18

Princess Margaret suffers stroke on holiday island

By Andrew Buncombe

Princess Margaret: 'stable'

PRINCESS MARGARET was last night recovering in a Caribbean hospital after suffering a mild stroke.

The Queen's 67-year-old sister was taken ill on the island of Mustique, where she had been holidaying for three weeks. After treatment at the island's surgery she was flown by air ambulance to Barbados.

Witnesses said the Princess, 11th in line to the throne, was well enough to walk onto the plane and last night she was said to be in a stable condition. It is understood she has suffered no serious paralysis.

Ken Will, spokesman for the Mustique Company, which runs the island, said: "She was able to walk from her car across the Tarmac to the plane. She was also sitting on the plane, there was no need for a stretcher."

Princess Margaret, four years younger than the Queen, was well known as a heavy smoker who used to get through 60 cigarettes a day, though she has since given up. Cigarette smoking is widely recognised as one of the risk factors associated with strokes.

She has suffered a series of health scares, one of the most serious being in 1985 when she was admitted to hospital for an operation to remove part of her lung. The section removed turned out to be non-malignant.

Despite her operation she failed to give up smoking immediately, although she did cut down to 30 cigarettes a day.

But ill-health has dogged the Princess, who suffered a nervous breakdown in the 70s. In May 1992 she had to cancel several days of engagements with a "feverish cold" and in late November with a "feverish infection". In January 1993 she was admitted to hospital with pneumonia.

In this latest episode, the Princess fell ill while being entertained by friends at their holiday home. Medical staff were immediately called to help her and she was taken to a nearby doctor's surgery for treatment.

The Queen yesterday carried on her normal engagements and made no reference to her sister's condition. Lord Snowdon, from whom the Princess is divorced, was said to be "most concerned" and has been in touch with the couple's children, Viscount Linley and Lady Sarah Chatto.

The Princess will be flown back to Britain when she is well enough for the long journey.

Loyalty and duty, page 3

09
9 770951 946535

Greer paid £1/2m for new 'Eunuch'

By Paul McCann
Media Correspondent

Greer: 'provocative'

GERMAINE GREER is to join battle with the so-called New Feminism after selling the sequel to her seminal book *The Female Eunuch* for £500,000.

After a bidding war between seven publishers on Monday the feminist icon's agent sold the rights to *The Whole Woman* to Doubleday Publishing. The book will be published next year – 30 years after *The Female Eunuch* made Greer a household name.

In the new book she is expected to enter the feminist debate on behalf of an older generation of feminists who believe women still have much to fight for. "She is looking at the routes feminism has taken, and taken us, over the last 30 years," says Greer's literary agent Emma Parry. "It will be provocative, but she won't analyse every individual feminist writer and their ideas in turn."

In recent years a new generation of feminist thinkers like Natasha Walter, Naomi Wolf and Katie Roiphe have argued for a less strident feminism. Some believe that the focus of the fight for female equality should now be restricted to the workplace. And that the personal is not necessarily political.

Another issue to be covered by the book is the failure of feminism adequately to deal with motherhood. In a major speech last year Greer argued that women had been de-sexed by Nineties culture: "The 1969 female eunuch was nothing but womb," she said. "The 1997 female eunuch has no womb."

Today's news

Cleared too late

A SOMALI sailor who was hanged 46 years ago for murder had his conviction quashed by the Court of Appeal yesterday. The guilty verdict against Mahmood Mattan's was overturned after the introduction of new evidence. His widow was in court for the ruling. **Page 2**

Connery hits out

SEAN CONNERY yesterday spoke of his disappointment at not being knighted as the row over the star's apparent snub grew. **Page 5**

IRA 'not to blame'

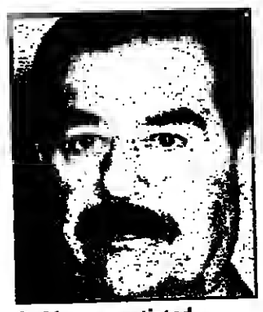
THE Northern Ireland peace talks continued yesterday as the British Government signalled it did not hold the IRA responsible for the recent bombings. **Page 3**

Tom Cruise top

TOM CRUISE has topped the movie industry's latest list of the most bankable film stars **Page 8**

Back at the UN, returning chief gets a hero's welcome

By David Usborne in New York



Saddam: negotiated

ON A DAY of rare euphoria at United Nations headquarters, the Security Council yesterday offered a preliminary endorsement of the agreement negotiated by the Secretary-General, Kofi Annan, with Iraq on weapons inspections and averting military action by Britain and the United States.

"We believe that this agreement is a step in the right direction," the US Ambassador to the UN, Bill Richardson, remarked after a two-hour meeting of the Security Council with Mr Annan. Mr Richardson added, however, that Washington would still be seeking clarification on portions of the agreement.

Mr Richardson insisted also that the value of the deal guaranteeing access by UN inspectors to presidential sites would be clear only after it was put to the test. "We want to see clarification and verification. We want to see it implemented, complied with and enforced."

Mr Annan voiced confidence that once all clarifications are given, he will have "strong and unanimous Council support" for the agreement. Noting that it is the first such pact to have been negotiated with Saddam Hussein himself, he also expressed optimism that it would be honoured by Iraq.

Before briefing the Council on his Baghdad mission, Mr Annan was treated to a stirring hero's welcome in the main foyer of the UN building where hundreds of staff had gathered to greet and to applaud him. A beaming Mr Annan declared: "This is a wonderful example of what the United Nations should be". He paid fulsome tribute to London and Washington: "I will start by thanking President Clinton and Prime Minister Blair for being perfect UN peacekeepers . . . in the sense that we taught our peacekeepers the best way to use force is to show it in order not to use it."

While stressing the need to see it tested, the British Ambassador, Sir John Weston, welcomed the Annan package. He said that the Council will begin work today on a new resolution to reinforce the agreement that "ought to allow us to put our relationship with Iraq on a more secure footing".

The clarification sought by Washington pertains in part to the language used in the agreement, notably a paragraph stressing that the inspectors "respect the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Iraq". Mr Richardson said: "Our concern is Saddam Hussein, whether he will find loopholes in any of the language".

Iraq crisis, page 12

THE £18 MIRACLE

That's how much it costs to restore the sight of a child needlessly blind in the world's developing countries.

Sight Savers International works to prevent and cure blindness in over 20 countries. We restore sight to thousands of needlessly blind people each year. We have now completed over 3,000,000 successful cataract operations. We help the incurably blind too by providing education and training that helps them get the most out of life.

Please help us do more. Was there ever a better use of your generosity?

I WANT TO SAVE SIGHT

My gift is ☐ £18 ☐ £36 ☐ £50 ☐ Other £ _____
Please make your cheque payable to Sight Savers International, or if you wish to pay by Mastercard, Visa, Amex, Switch or CAF charity card, enter your card number in the boxes below.
Card Expiry Date ____ Switch Issue No ____
Signature ____
Mr/Mrs/Miss/Ms ____ Initials ____ Surname ____
Address ____
____ Postcode ____
Please return this coupon with your donation to: Room No IN55, Sight Savers International, FREEPOST, Haywards Heath, West Sussex, RH16 4BR.
SIGHT SAVERS INTERNATIONAL
Registered Charity Number 207561
IN 86

INSIDE GUIDE: WEATHER, P2 • CROSSWORDS, P28 AND EYE P10 • TODAY'S TELEVISION, EYE P12 • FULL CONTENTS, P2

TOMORROW

Who said satire was dead?

Not Jeremy Hardy, Rory Bremner or Chris Morris

Plus

■ Terence Stamp: A career lost, a life rekindled

■ Education+: Be a professor - thanks to Boots the Chemist

CONTENTS

News	2-8	Obituaries	18
Foreign	9-12	Business	19-23
Health	13	Shares	22
Visual Arts	14	Unit Trusts	23
Features	15	Sport	24-28
Leader & letters	16	Crosswords	28, The Eye 10
Comment	17	TV & radio	The Eye 11 &12

NEWSPAPERS SUPPORT RECYCLING
Recycled paper made up 41.4% of the raw material for UK newspapers in 1997

Judge clears man who was hanged

By Jason Bennetto
Crime Correspondent

A SOMALI sailor, who was hanged 46 years ago for murdering a shopkeeper, was yesterday cleared of the crime – the first person to have their conviction quashed in Britain after being executed.

The family of Mahmood Hussein Mattan, who was hanged in Cardiff jail in 1952, are expected to be awarded compensation estimated between £500,000 and £750,000.

South Wales police are also to re-open their murder investigation after evidence emerged to suggest that a suspect, who was later convicted of a similar crime, was ignored. The Court of Appeal quashed the conviction after hearing evidence that the key witness in Mattan's murder trial was unreliable.

The decision to overturn the conviction follows 46 years of campaigning by Mr Mattan's widow, Laura, her family, and campaigners. Previous convictions involving the death penalty have only be given a pardon, which does not clear the defendant of a crime.

Mr Mattan, 28, was hanged after being convicted of murdering pawnbroker Lily Volpert. Her throat was cut and £100 taken in an attack at her shop in the city's docklands.

The Crown yesterday conceded that the witness central to the conviction – Harold Cover, now 78 – was not "credible". Descriptions given by Mr Cover, who was later convicted of attempting to murder his daughter, did not match Mr Mattan. Mr Cover, who was in court yesterday, denies that he killed Miss Volpert.

It has also just emerged that another Somali sailor, Tahir Gass, whom Mr Cover had originally said had been in the area at the time of the murder, was arrested within hours of Miss Volpert's killing. He left the country but was convicted in 1954 of murdering a farmhand by cutting his throat.

Outside court Bernard De Maid, the family's solicitor, said his clients feelings were one of "massive, massive relief".

Laura Mattan with supporters after her husband (above left) was cleared of murder at the Court of Appeal 46 years after he was hanged at Cardiff jail Photograph: Peter Jordan

Widow tells of racial hatred that led to a 'legalised lynching'

By Jason Bennetto

IT TOOK just three months of courting before Laura Williams, a 17-year-old Welsh girl, and Mahmood Mattan, a Somali merchant seaman, were wed.

But the year was 1945 and from the start the couple were vilified by their neighbours in the Cardiff community of Tiger Bay and forced to live apart. She was abused as a "black man's whore", he was hated for being an immigrant, and there were only three families who would speak to them.

"[Mahmood] was the best thing that happened to me in my life. He made me feel like a queen," recalled Mrs Mattan, now 68 and suffering from cancer. "People already called me names because I came from the Valleys. When I married Mahmood I was told I had brought shame on the community."

The couple had two children, but within seven years she was made a widow after a court convicted her 29-year-old husband of slashing the throat of a shopkeeper, and stealing £100.

He stood little chance in his trial, which lasted three days. The jury was out for little more than 90 minutes, during which time the defence barrister was heard to call his client a "semi-civilised savage". The conviction was based on a now discredited witness and Mr Mattan was hanged seven weeks later.

Yesterday, after 46 years of campaigning, the courts were forced to admit they got it wrong and quash the conviction.

Mrs Mattan's MP, Rhodri Morgan, yesterday described the affair as "an outrageous act of racial discrimination" and the "nearest thing to a legalised lynching you could get".

He went on: "The case also forces us in south Wales to rethink our somewhat complacent attitudes about Cardiff's history as a cosmopolitan melting pot where blacks and whites lived happily together in Tiger Bay."

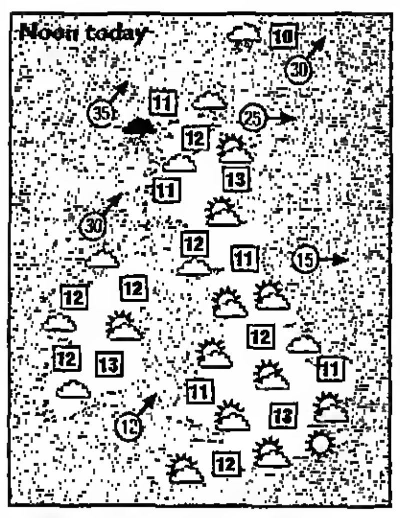
Remembering the days leading up to the execution, Mrs Mattan, said: "I visited Mahmood every day in prison and took the children along as well. The NSPCC told me not to – but he wanted to see his sons.

"We believed that the police would get the person who killed Miss Volpert right up until the end. Because of this, I never said goodbye to Mahmood. The day before the execution we talked with the children. The next day I arrived at Cardiff prison, where there was a notice on the prison gates that the execution had taken place."

Mr Mattan's case was the first to be referred to the Court of Appeal by the newly formed Criminal Cases Review Commission. The commission has already referred the case of Derek Bentley, hanged in 1953 for the murder of a policeman, to the courts, and is due to decide on James Hanratty, who was hanged 35 years ago for the A6 murder, in about a month.

WEATHER

Noon today

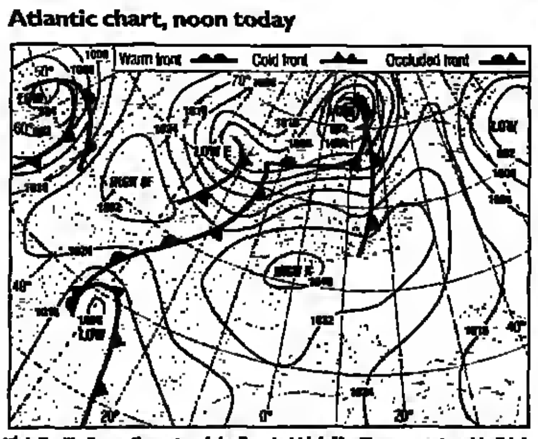


Eastern Scotland and south-eastern parts of Northern Ireland will be mostly dry and bright, but western Scotland and the rest of Northern Ireland will be breezy with patchy drizzle giving way to a heavier spell of rain by evening. North-west England and some western coasts of Wales and south-west England will see occasional cloud and local mist, but it should remain dry with a few sunny breaks. The rest of England and Wales will have another dry and mild day with good spells of sunshine.

Outlook for the next few days

Tomorrow, a belt of rain will cross all parts of the UK, reaching East Anglia and the south-east towards evening. Behind the rain-belt it will turn slightly colder with sunny spells and showers – some of these showers turning to snow over Scotland by the end of the day. Friday and the weekend will be much colder everywhere with broken cloud, a little sunshine at times, but also some fairly heavy snow showers.

Atlantic chart, noon today



High K will slip south-east and decline, but high M will move east and build. Low E will move east and deepen.

Air quality

Yesterday's readings

	NO_2	SO_2
London	Moderate	Good
S England	Moderate	Good
Wales	Good	Good
C England	Good	Good
N England	Good	Good
Scotland	Good	Good
N Ireland	Good	Good

Outlook for today

London	Moderate	Good
S England	Moderate	Good
Wales	Good	Good
C England	Moderate	Good
N England	Good	Good
Scotland	Good	Good
N Ireland	Good	Good

High tides

London	00:21	6.6	12:52	6.9
Liverpool	10:06	9.2	22:31	9.2
Avonmouth	05:57	12.9	18:24	13.1
Hull (Albert Dock)	05.12	8.1	17:25	8.4
Greenock	11:39	3.3	23:54	3.2
Dun Laoghaire	10:30	4.0	22:53	4.0

Height measured in metres

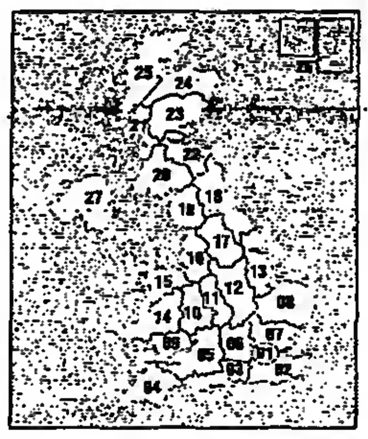
Lighting-up times

Belfast	17.51 to	07 21
Birmingham	17.39 to	07.01
Bristol	17.43 to	07.02
Glasgow	17.42 to	07 16
London	17.33 to	06.53
Manchester	17.39 to	07.04
Newcastle	17.33 to	07 04

Sun & moon

Sun rises	06.55	Sun sets	17.33
Moon rises	06.06	Moon sets	16.10

New moon Tomorrow



INDEPENDENT Weatherline

For the latest forecasts dial 0891 5009 followed by the two digits for your area indicated by the above map

Source: The Met Office. Calls charged at 50p per min at all times (inc VAT).

Out and about with AA Roadwatch

Call 0336 401777 for the latest local and national traffic news. Source: The Automobile Association. Calls charged at 50p per min at all times (inc VAT)

World weather

most recent available figure at noon local time

Akrotiri	S 20 68		Chicago	C 9 48		Lima	C 30 86		Perth	F 26 78
Alexandria	I 18 64		Christchurch	Sh 15 59		Lisbon	S 13 55		Port Stanley	R 8 48
Algiers	C 14 57		Cologne	C 11 52		Locarno	S 11 52		Prague	R 5 41
Alicante	S 15 59		Copenhagen	C 9 48		Los Angeles	C 16 61		Reykjavik	C 6 43
Amsterdam	C 10 50		Corfu	F 17 63		Luxembourg	C 9 48		Rhodes	F 17 63
Anchorage	C 0 32		Crete	S 15 59		Madrid	S 11 52		Rio de Jan	F 29 84
Athens	C 16 61		Dakar	C 27 81		Majorca	Dr 12 54		Riyadh	S 20 68
Auckland	Sh 19 66		Darwin	C 30 86		Malaga	F 16 61		Rome	C 11 52
Bahrain	S 22 72		Dhahran	S 22 72		Malta	F 14 57		Salzburg	C 9 48
Bangkok	I 35 95		Faro	S 16 61		Manila	F 32 90		San Fran	R 13 55
Barbados	F 29 84		Florence	H 15 59		Mecca	F 28 82		Santiago	F 23 73
Barcelona	F 15 59		Frankfurt	C 5 41		Melbourne	S 29 84		Seoul	C 9 48
Beirut	C 18 64		Funchal	F 18 54		Mexico City	S 24 75		Singapore	C 34 93
Belgrade	S 12 54		Geneva	C 9 43		Miami	F 25 77		Stockholm	C 5 41
Berlin	C 10 50		Gibraltar	S 15 61		Milan	S 18 64		Strasbourg	C 9 48
Bermuda	C 19 66		Harare	C 26 79		Mombasa	F 32 90		Sydney	C 26 78
Biarritz	C 12 54		Helsinki	I -4 25		Montreal	C -1 30		T'aipei	S 19 67
Bogota	C 22 72		Hong Kong	C 11 63		Moscow	Th 3 31		Tel Aviv	S 20 68
Bombay	S 28 82		Honolulu	C 26 79		Munich	C 8 46		Tenerife	S 25 77
Bordeaux	C 11 52		Istanbul	S 11 52		Nairobi	F 25 79		Tokyo	R 7 45
Brisbane	F 21 81		Jakarta	C 30 86		Naples	F 15 59		Toronto	C 4 39
Brussels	C 11 52		Jeddah	F 27 81		Nassau	C 28 82		Tunis	C 13 55
Bucharest	S 14 51		Jerusalem	C 13 55		New Delhi	R 15 59		Valencia	S 16 61
Budapest	I 13 55		Jo'burg	C 23 73		New Orleans	S 15 59		Vancouver	F 8 47
Buenos Aires	C 21 10		Karachi	S 21 78		New York	C 6 43		Venice	S 15 59
Cairo	F 19 66		Kathmandu	C 15 59		Nice	S 18 64		Vienna	C 13 55
Calgary	I 5 41		Kiev	C 9 48		Nicosia	S 22 72		Warsaw	M 6 43
Cape Town	S 26 79		Kingston	S 31 88		Oslo	C 6 43		Washington	R 5 41
Caracas	C 22 12		Kuala Lumpur	C 35 95		Paris	C 11 52		Wellington	R 15 58
Casablanca	F 18 64		Las Palmas	S 23 73		Peking	S 7 45		Zurich	M 7 45

British Isles weather

most recent available figure at noon local time

C.cloudy; Cl.clear; F.fair; Fg.fog; Hz.haze; M.mist; R.rain; S.sunny; Sl.sleet; Sh.showers; Sn.snow; Th.thunder.

Aberdeen	S 14 57		Bristol	F 12 54		Guernsey	C 11 52		Newcastle	C 12 54
Anglesey	S 11 52		Cardiff	F 13 55		Inverness	C 13 55		Oxford	C 10 50
Ayr	C 10 50		Carlisle	C 11 52		Ipswich	F 11 52		Plymouth	F 12 54
Belfast	C 18 50		Dover	S 10 50		Isles of Scilly	C 12 54		Scarborough	F 15 59
Birmingham	C 11 52		Dublin	F 11 52		Jersey	C 11 52		Southampton	C 12 54
Blackpool	F 9 48		Edinburgh	C 12 54		Liverpool	F 9 48		Southend	F 12 54
Bournemouth	C 12 54		Exeter	C 12 50		London	C 11 52		Stornoway	C 11 52
Brighton	C 12 54		Glasgow	C 12 54		Manchester	C 11 52		York	F 14 57

WILLIAM HARTSTON WEATHER WISE

First we saw the film *Twister*, then we read about the real-life tornado that swept through Selsey earlier this year, and now news of a swarm of tornadoes which have killed at least 38 people in Florida. These most vicious of weather phenomena seem to have whirled into fashion, yet – apart from the fact that this has been the worst tornado disaster in Florida's history – there is nothing especially unusual about the tornado activity this year. Unless you count all the mistakes in the above-mentioned film.

Tornadoes occur when a column of warm air gets caught below a layer of cold air, above which a strong cold wind is blowing. The warm air rises, forming a funnel through its cold surroundings; it is replaced by more warm air at ground level, which is in turn sucked up as the air at the top of the funnel is blown away. Give the whole apparatus a small twist, and it will whirl away with ever-increasing angular momentum. Parts of the United States have just the right climatic conditions favouring the production of tornadoes, where warm, moist air from the Gulf of Mexico or the Caribbean meets cool air coming down from Canada. The direction of these air masses even provides the twist needed to start it all off.

Now here are some of the things that you may not have known about tornadoes and related weather disasters:

The largest number of deaths from a single tornado in America is usually given as the 698 killed in 1925 by a tornado that stretched for 219 miles. This was probably, however, not a single tornado but a family of them coming close on one another, similar to the ones that have just hit Florida.

In the 1980s, 521 Americans were killed by tornadoes, but 726 were killed by lightning.

In Ohio, six per cent of all deaths by lightning happen as the victims are playing golf.

The country that experiences the most tornadoes per unit area is Britain.

More Americans are killed by tornadoes in April than in any other month.

You cannot (though they did in the film) assess the rating of a tornado until after it is over and the damage is assessed.

A house (despite Dorothy's experience in *The Wizard of Oz*) cannot be lifted bodily by a tornado. It will collapse first.

A car would not sucked straight up into the funnel of a tornado; it would rise and move through the air sideways too.

Caravan parks seem to attract more than their fair share of tornadoes only because mobile homes blow over more easily than houses. The same tornado that might cause havoc among caravans could pass through a built-up area without anyone bothering to record it.

Nobody has been killed by a tornado in California.

Tornadoes turn anti-clockwise in the northern hemisphere – or to put it another way, cyclones turn cyclonically.

The tornadoes in the film *Twister* were made by random-movement and vortex-creation computer programs. No wind was involved.

A large truck would not be picked up by a tornado. It would be blown over and twisted out of shape. Even a car would first capsize before flying through the air.

The average age of Americans killed by tornadoes is 45, the average American killed by lightning is only 30.

More than twice as many men as women are killed by extreme weather in America.

Although Florida has more tornadoes per square mile than any other American state, until this week they were mostly small ones.

■ Get your hats, coats, gloves, scarves and perhaps even snowshoes out. The Met Office predicts that the real winter will finally arrive with icy arctic winds at the weekend. Well, it's good news for the Scottish ski slopes anyway.

Three fast systems. Speed dial now.

DELL DIMENSION™ XPS D266
- INTEL PENTIUM® II PROCESSOR 266MHZ
- INTEL 440LX AGPSET
- 64MB SDRAM
- 512KB INTERNAL CACHE
- 6.4GB ATA-33 HARD DRIVE
- STB VELOCITY nVIDIA AGP GRAPHICS CARD WITH 4MB SGRAM VIDEO MEMORY
- 17" COLOUR SVGA MONITOR (0.28 DOT PITCH, 15.9" VIEWABLE AREA)
- 3 PCI, 1 ISA, 1 PCI/ISA SHARED AND 1 AGP EXPANSION SLOTS
- 14/32X CD-ROM DRIVE
- YAMAHA XG SOFTWARE WAVETABLE SOUND (SPEAKERS OPTIONAL)
- MID-SIZED DESKTOP CHASSIS
- WINDOWS 95 & MICROSOFT® OFFICE 97 SMALL BUSINESS EDITION

£1,199 (£1,444.08 INC. DELIVERY & VAT)

DELL DIMENSION XPS D333
- INTEL PENTIUM II PROCESSOR 333MHZ
- INTEL 440LX AGPSET
- 64MB SDRAM
- 512KB INTERNAL CACHE
- 6.4GB HARD DRIVE
- STB VELOCITY nVIDIA AGP VIDEO CARD WITH 4MB SGRAM VIDEO MEMORY
- 17" COLOUR SVGA MONITOR (0.28 DOT PITCH, 15.9" VIEWABLE AREA)
- 3 PCI, 1 ISA, 1 PCI/ISA SHARED AND 1 AGP EXPANSION SLOTS
- 14-32X CD-ROM DRIVE
- YAMAHA XG SOFTWARE WAVETABLE SOUND (SPEAKERS OPTIONAL)
- MID-SIZED DESKTOP CHASSIS
- WINDOWS 95 & MICROSOFT OFFICE 97 SMALL BUSINESS EDITION

£1,449 (£1,737.83 INC. DELIVERY & VAT)

DELL DIMENSION XPS D300 MT MULTIMEDIA
- INTEL PENTIUM II PROCESSOR 300MHZ
- INTEL 440LX AGPSET
- 64MB SDRAM
- 512KB INTERNAL CACHE
- 8.4GB HARD DRIVE
- STB VELOCITY nVIDIA AGP VIDEO CARD WITH 4MB SGRAM VIDEO MEMORY
- HIGH PERFORMANCE TCO 17" COLOUR SVGA MONITOR (0.26 DOT PITCH, TRINITRON® CRT, 15.65" VIEWABLE AREA)
- 3 PCI, 1 ISA, 1 PCI/ISA SHARED AND 1 AGP EXPANSION SLOTS
- DVD MULTIMEDIA SUBSYSTEM: DVD ROM DRIVE AND DECODER CARD
- AWE 64 SOUND AND ALTEC LANSING ACS495 SPEAKERS
- IOMEGA ZIP DRIVE AND 3X100MB CARTRIDGES
- MINI TOWER CHASSIS
- WINDOWS 95 & MICROSOFT OFFICE 97 SMALL BUSINESS EDITION
- US ROBOTICS 56Kbp/s MODEM

£1,779 (£2,125.58 INC. DELIVERY & VAT)

Value for money today - plus the speed and the specs to keep you ahead well into the future. That's precisely what our three latest Pentium® II processor-based systems deliver. Read the specifications, then call the world's largest direct PC manufacturer* or get online to our website quickly. We can't hold these prices long. *Source: IDC

TALK DIRECT TO THE NUMBER ONE
0870 152 4667
BETWEEN 8AM & 8PM WEEKDAYS, 10AM TO 4PM SAT
To order online 24 hours: www.dell.com/uk

DELL®

هكذا من الاصل

Ma'am darling: the princess driven by loyalty and duty

By Flammetta Rocco

ONE OF the Queen's greatest fears, according to her friends, is that the Queen Mother and Princess Margaret will die one soon after the other, leaving her alone. The three Windsor women are very close, and it has not been a good year for them.

Princess Margaret was once the Queen's greatest worry. Now she is one of her greatest supporters, among the last of a dwindling band of people who have been close to the Queen since before she ascended the throne.

The Princess's friends say her qualities are great, but, as even they – or most of them – will admit, so too are her defects. There is little in between. She either hates things or loves them. Everything is theatrical, with that little touch of vulgar taste she shares with the other women in her family; her thank you letters, so purple they could be from Liberace; her Sevres blue drawing room at 1A Clock Court, her apartment at Kensington Palace; the pair of gilded blackamoors either side of its main doors.

To her friends she is a real friend. "She is probably the loyalest friend you could have, once she's decided she likes you," says Lady Elizabeth Cavendish. Her little band of pals constantly cossets her, arranging her travels, paying for her social life – she doesn't carry a cheque book and doesn't have a credit card – and organising entertainments to keep her happy.

She likes to go and stay with them for the weekend. Her lady-in-waiting, Annabel Whitehead, rings up ahead of time to arrange an invitation. Invariably this gets her hosts flustered. One had her bedroom rewired so the Princess could use her Carmen rollers. But the Princess doesn't seem to notice. What she enjoys most, they all confirm, is lighting fires and dead-heading the roses with shiny secateurs.

She takes against people and cannot be budged once her mind is made up. She never received the Duchess of Windsor, although her mother eventually did, on the occasion of the Duke's funeral in 1972. She refuses to go and stay with Jocelyn Stevens because his ex-wife, Janie, is one of her oldest friends and was given Princess Margaret's children's nursery at Kensington Palace to use as her own flat.

Sharp-witted rather than deeply intelligent, the Princess can also be sharp tongued. She demands obeisance. Everyone calls her Ma'am, and even her closest friends still call her "Ma'am darling". She has a nose for anyone trying to be overfamiliar, turning her head away as if she had encountered a dog mess. As one of her occasional dates says: "She can be unbelievably rude. Quite takes your breath away." She still does more royal engagements than most people might imagine. These are B list jobs, perhaps, but someone has to do them.

Indeed, her loyalty to her sovereign is, even to her enemies, her single greatest virtue. Recently, turning down a journalist's request for an interview, she passed on a message through her friend, Lady Penn. "Tell her," she said, "that everything I do is to support the Queen and to help her."

They speak on the telephone every day and take note of each other's small wishes. Princess Margaret recently gave her elder sister five powder puffs for Christmas. It's not the sort of thing she would get from anyone else.

IN THE NEWS
PRINCESS MARGARET

Dangers of flight home

Princess Margaret's flight back to Britain will carry risks, an expert in aviation medicine said last night. The cabin pressure, normally set at the equivalent of a height of around 7,000ft, will mean thinner air and less oxygen.
Dr Ian Perry said it was essential that her condition was stable and getting better rather than worse and that the cause was understood before the flight was attempted. "It might be better to fly a top-rate neurologist out to her," he said. Normally, with standard treatment, she should be safe to travel in a few days, especially if the stroke was mild.

Margaret: Sharp-witted rather than deeply intelligent, she also has a sharp tongue Photograph: Charles Donnelly

The health warnings

Princess Margaret's first big health scare came in January 1985 when she was admitted to hospital for an operation to have part of her lung removed. Although she gave up her 60-a-day smoking habit immediately following the operation, within a few months she was back to a packet and a half a day. In more recent years, she has been continually dogged by ill-health. In May 1992 she was forced to cancel several days of engagements as a result of a "feverish cold" and again in November of that year she was struck down by a "feverish infection". In January 1993, she was admitted to the King Edward VII Hospital in London suffering from pneumonia. Her last public appearance was earlier this month when she visited the Queen Mother after her hip replacement operation.

Mustique's mystique

The island of Mustique in the Caribbean was bought by Colin Tennant in 1959. Ten years later, he created the Mustique Company, which owns the island and rents out its luxury villas. The company has 50 shareholders and in recent times they have been concerned that the demands and tastes of wealthy Americans could irrevocably change Mustique's image. "There is something very special and 'English' about Mustique which we want to retain," the island's manager, Brian Alexander, told the *Times* last May. "The Americans expect to find the same things they would in Florida resorts. We don't want a golf course, but we do want to keep the cricket pitch, for example." The company was spending more than £250,000 on a marketing drive to attract more holidaymakers from the UK and had even set up a satellite station to receive BBC and Sky television programmes. A villa sleeping two people costs from just under £2,000 a week to rent. A larger villa, such as the one owned by Patrick Lichfield, costs around £12,000 a week.

Whatever happened to Roddy?

The man made famous by being Princess Margaret's escort celebrated his 50th birthday last year. Married with three children, he lives in a 14th-century former pub in Oxfordshire. He has a full-time landscape design business and lectures, writes and makes television series about garden design. He has never spoken publicly about his relationship with Princess Margaret despite lucrative offers from newspapers and publishers. Journalists are warned in advance of meeting him that the subject is off limits.

Some fascinating Facts

She was born in Glamis Castle, making her the first royal child to be born in Scotland for more than 300 years. The registration of her birth was delayed for several days in order to avoid her being numbered 13 in the parish register.
In 1954, she directed a West End play called *The Frog*. It sank without trace.
In 1978 she became the first royal to divorce since Henry VIII.

Tom Cruise tops the bankability rankings

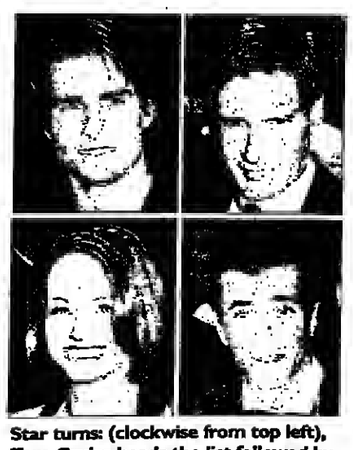
By Paul McCann
Media Correspondent

TOM CRUISE has topped the movie industry bible's list of the greatest film stars in the world, not because of his acting talent or the quality of his films, but because of his "bankability".

The *Hollywood Reporter* has published its Star Power list for the first time in three years, a listing from nought to 100 of the power which Hollywood's major stars have to get films made that make money. Cruise just edges ahead of Harrison Ford with 100 points to Ford's 99. Behind them come Mel Gibson (98 points), Tom Hanks (97) and Brad Pitt (96). The highest ranking woman on the list is Jodie Foster who at number 10 on the list gets a 93.82 rating.

Those on the top of the Star Power list are those who can get their movies made regardless of the cost, the genre of film, who the director of the film is or what the script is like. They are stars whose name on a reel gets it sold across the globe without film distributors even watching the film.

The highest ranking British star on the list is Sean Connery who gets a 88.32 rating to come in as 18th most powerful star in the movie firmament. This ranks Connery above American stars like Michael Douglas, Demi Moore and even *Titanic*'s Leonardo di Caprio. The next Brit on the list is fellow Bond actor Pierce Brosnan who is 33 on the list. Fellow Celt Anthony Hopkins comes in at three places below with a 76.88 rating. Emma Thompson is Britain's highest ranking female and comes in above stars like Madonna and Whoopi Goldberg.



Star turns: (clockwise from top left), Tom Cruise heads the list followed by Harrison Ford and Mel Gibson. Jodie Foster is the highest ranked woman

Although some movers in Hollywood have been talking up the importance of scripts and directors in recent years, others disagree: "Star power gets your movies made and gets your movies sold," says Greg Coote, president of Village Roadshow pictures. "The marketing becomes easier. The ancillaries – TV, video – become easier to sell."

The *Hollywood Reporter*'s list is scarily comprehensive and pulls no punches with an actor's ego. Nick Nolte languishes as the 100th most powerful star in Hollywood and yet he gets 55.38 points and is followed by 300 lesser known stars.

The list was compiled by polling the movie industry's film buyers, executives, producers and distributors on how each star would guarantee financing and overseas sales of films.

"This list is used as a tool in Hollywood," says Jeff Kaye, European bureau chief for the *Hollywood Reporter*, "especially when execs are trying to guess who to cast in films they want to do well overseas. They will look at the *Hollywood Reporter*'s rankings."

Oasis go over the top down under

By Steven Vines
in Hong Kong

BY THE demanding standards of bad behaviour which the rock group Oasis have set for themselves, they were a model of restraint during a brief concert appearance in Hong Kong. The audience suffered no more than minimal abuse, Noel Gallagher only threatened to walk off the stage once, and they only kept the fans waiting for an hour or so.

But impeccable behaviour was clearly a strain. It therefore came as no surprise that they felt the need to let off steam and cause a degree of mayhem when jetting out of the former colony to continue their tour in Perth, Australia.

Occupying six business class seats on Cathay Pacific flight CX171 which arrived in Perth on Monday night, they alarmed fellow passengers, who complained of "noisy, disruptive and abusive behaviour."

Staff attempting to enforce the smoking ban on the flight were also subjected to abuse.

The band and their entourage were reported to have hoarded the flight with the benefit of alcoholic fortification. They were rowdy more or less from the moment they got on the plane.

One report, which Cathay in Hong Kong says it is unable to confirm, states that the Captain considered diverting the flight before arriving in Perth so that the disruptive passengers could be unloaded.

A Cathay spokesman in Sydney said the airline was not prepared to carry members of Oasis again unless they furnished a promise of "adult behaviour". At Cathay headquarters a spokesman said: "We reserve the right to accept or not accept passengers."

It is not known whether the Gallagher brothers, Noel and Liam, were directly involved in the disruption. During the 90-minute Oasis concert, they gave indirect warning of what was to come on flight CX171 by offering a spirited rendition of "Cigarettes And Alcohol".

By the time the concert was over, Noel Gallagher was in sufficiently mellow mood to confound his bad boy image by actually thanking the audience.

At a pre-concert press conference he spoke about how the group were planning to "trash the hotel room and throw TVs through windows". This, apparently, was a joke. Mr Gallagher made this clear by saying: "Someone who looks a bit like us will knock over some plant pots in the hotel lobby and we'll probably get arrested."

Cathay Pacific is still ploughing its way through "several" passenger complaints.

HAMISH
AUNTIE FLO
MICHAEL
JULIE
DAVID
CAROLINE
CHRIS
PATRICK
DEE
GEORGE
KAZ & DAVE
NICKY
RACHEL
GRAN
SIMON
PHILIP
CHARLIE
WILLIAM
MIKE
JACK
UNCLE JOHN
PAMELA
ELLA
MUM & DAD
HELEN
PAULINE
JACKIE & CHRIS
DAVID H
ANDY
LIZ
GREG
KYLIE
STEVE
DEREK
ANN
CLIVE
BEN
LISA
LILIAN
ROBIN & LOUISE
JACKIE
ALISON
HARRY
STACEY
JO
ELISABETH
CLAIRE
EVELYN
JILL
MANDY
PAUL
MAUREEN
JEREMY
UNCLETOM
CHARLOTTE
SAMANTHA
JOHN
KAREN
BUNTY
MIRANDA

You can save 25% on your UK long distance calls.

When your nearest and dearest live all over the country, what do you do? You call them of course. Now you can chat away for much less.

With Cable & Wireless UK-Call, you enjoy savings of 25% during the evening, Monday to Friday on a five minute national call (compared to BT's basic rate).

If you like a good gossip late in the evening, our special night-time rate, between 10pm and 8am, Monday to Friday, can save you 43%.

And don't forget on Saturdays, until the end of March 1998, no UK long distance call will cost you more than 50p. Also, you'll automatically receive at least 100 free minutes of local evening calls every month. (All this for a quarterly fee of £3.75.)

To find out how much you could save, ring us now on FreeCall 0500 500 366, quoting RINDMA.

CABLE & WIRELESS
What can we do for you?

Savings correct as at 22/1/98. Evening rate applies from 6pm to 10pm, Monday to Friday. Application subject to status. To improve our service, we may occasionally monitor or record your telephone calls to and from Cable & Wireless.

Me and my mum: the day I became Sir Elton

Noble gesture: The singer Sir Elton John and his mother, Sheila Farebrother, after his investiture yesterday at Buckingham Palace. 'Candle in the Wind', his tribute to Diana, Princess of Wales, set a world record for sales of a single; Pandora's Box, page 19Photograph: Richard Young/Rex Features

'Fixer' jailed for airport bombing

By Jason Bennetto
Crime Correspondent

AN IRA "fixer" who helped other men fire Semtex mortar bombs on Heathrow Airport was jailed for 20 years yesterday.

Michael Gallagher, 55, provided "vital" back-up to the Provisionals' active service unit which could have left hundreds dead if the bombs had gone off in the attack in March 1994.

The Glaswegian-born father of three was caught after a two-and-a-half year surveillance operation, involving the Anti-Terrorist Branch, Special Branch and MI5, which followed a tip off from a neighbour who saw men wearing rubber gloves working in a garage.

Three hatches of home-made missiles, packed with Semtex, were fired into the airport from remote-controlled launchers close to the perimeter fence, over five days. One landed on Terminal Four's roof, packed with travellers, while another narrowly missed six cleaners. They all failed to go off.

The attack was widely seen as a blunt verdict on the Downing Street peace declaration four months earlier.

A jury at Woolwich Crown Court, London, convicted Gallagher by 11-1 of conspiring to cause explosions. Mr Justice Richard Tucker told him: "This series of attacks resulted in enormous disruption of services and it was in my view purely fortuitous that there was no injury or loss of life or extensive damage to aircraft, to runways or to terminal buildings."

Gallagher had rented a garage in which a vehicle and bombs were prepared. "Your role may have been a lesser one but it was nevertheless an important one without which this operation could not have been mounted," the judge said.

He praised Mr Garneys, who notified the police after he became suspicious of activities at the lock-up garage near his home in West Hampstead.

An Irishman had knocked at his home and asked him to move his car, which was blocking a garage entrance.

Mr Garneys noticed that the men kept the garage doors closed to prevent him seeing inside. He saw a second man wearing blue rubber gloves holding the garage doors open.

He subsequently discovered the men were working there at night. It was later believed they had been assembling the missiles and launchers then.

Undercover officers staked out the premises and bugged a telephone line.

Gallagher was often tailed around London, and during frequent visits to Northern Ireland and on a trip to Dublin. On one day alone he was followed by 29 operatives as he headed across London to meet someone police are convinced was a leading Provisional.

Hundreds of his conversations at his flat were recorded. Forensic scientists had uncovered a wealth of circumstantial evidence and forensic evidence pointed to Gallagher being a contributor to the Heathrow attacks.

He was also a self-confessed benefit cheat.

Ulster talks crawl along

Bertie Ahern: Held talks yesterday with Sinn Fein

By David McKittrick
Ireland Correspondent

THE Northern Ireland peace process edged gingerly along yesterday with reportedly useful political talks and signals from the government that it does not hold the IRA to blame for recent bombings.

Tensions appeared to ease somewhat in the multi-party talks as parties discussed the possible shape of new north-south institutions in a new political arrangement.

But at the same time the RUC and army cranked up security in some areas in the wake of the republican bombings which caused widespread damage in the Protestant towns of Moira and Portadown.

Political development minister Paul Murphy said the Moira bomb appeared to have been carried out by the breakaway Continuity army council rather than the mainstream IRA, adding: "As far as we know the IRA ceasefire is intact." The Portadown attack was still under investigation, he said.

Both Sinn Fein and the IRA, meanwhile, have been denying IRA involvement in either attack. Sinn Fein is presently barred from the talks process because of previous IRA violence, but remained politically active yesterday with a meeting between party leaders and the Taoiseach, Bertie Ahern, in Dublin.

Mr Murphy said that yesterday and on Monday the political talks had been "very positive, very structured, very hopeful and very encouraging. One of the talks participants, David Ervine of the Progressive Unionist party, advanced the theory that the IRA was split. He added: "It is a position which we perhaps always knew was coming, but we don't know the size of the split so we have got to wait and see." The PUP also reiterated its warning that the ceasefire maintained by its parent paramilitary organisation, the Ulster Volunteer Force, was in danger following the republican bombings.

■ The Home Secretary is scrapping the power to issue exclusion orders against alleged terrorists from Northern Ireland entering mainland Britain, writes Colin Brown. Jack Straw said in a Commons written answer he was rejecting the advice of JJ Rowe, who recommended the power of exclusion should be kept following his annual review of the Prevention of Terrorism (Temporary Provisions) Act 1989.

GCSE and A-level 'getting easier'

By Judith Judd
Education Editor

EXAM standards may be falling, Chris Woodhead, the Chief Inspector of Schools said yesterday.

In GCSE English exams, ministers must address the question of whether grammar and punctuation were being sacrificed because pupils were being taught more knowledge, he argued.

Mr Woodhead made his controversial suggestion in his annual lecture at the Royal Society of Arts in London. He appeared to contradict statements by ministers after last summer's GCSE and A-level exams, saying that standards have remained the same for the last 20 years.

He said that an inquiry carried out last year by government exam advisers and his Office for Standards in Education had found no evidence that exams had become easier over the last two decades.

But the inquiry into maths, English and chemistry had not, he emphasised, given GCSE and A-levels "a clean bill of health". It had not come to definite conclusions because the exam boards had not been able to produce enough examples of past scripts.

Instead, it had raised questions about whether broader syllabuses had led to poorer grammar and spelling.

"I can of course understand why some find it easier to sweep such issues under the carpet. To raise the possibility that examinations may not be as demanding today as they were 20 years ago is to call into question the reality of the inexorable rise in achievement the examination statistics seem year by year to suggest.

The qualifications and Curriculum Authority last night issued a robust rebuttal of Mr Woodhead's remarks. It said it had carried out inquiries into four more subjects at GCSE and five at A level since the previous investigation.

Before you go shopping this weekend, check out the Q's.

Q. Is Air Conditioning included? A. It certainly is.
Q. DOES IT HAVE PLIP CENTRAL LOCKING? A. IT DOES.
Q. WHAT ABOUT COLOURS? SOMETHING STRIKING... A. How about metallic Nile Blue, or pearlescent Diablo Red? Q. How about a really sexy cloth trim interior? A. You've got it.
Q. What about security? A. The engine immobiliser system comes as standard. Q. Does it have power steering? A. It does have power steering.
Q. Airbags? A. Driver's and front passenger's.‡
Q. Is there a choice of engines? A. SURE: 1.4, 1.6 PETROL AND 1.9 TURBO DIESEL.
Q. ELECTRIC FRONT WINDOWS? A. OF COURSE.
Q. Do I have to pay extra for alloy wheels‡? A. Nope.
Q. Is the steering wheel height adjustable? A. Absolutely. As are the front seat belts and head restraints.
Q. Tinted glass, a possibility? A. Tinted glass, a certainty.
Q. Q. I'd also like front fog lights, as standard? OK? A. OK.
Q. FINANCE†... WHAT'S YOUR BEST? A. How about 2 Years' 0% Finance?†*

PEUGEOT
THE DRIVE OF YOUR LIFE

THE 306 VIVANT, FROM £11,950* FOR MORE DETAILS ON THE 306 SPECIAL EDITIONS CALL 0345 306 306^ www.peugeot.co.uk

†OFFER SUBJECT TO STATUS (OVER 18s ONLY). A GUARANTOR MAY BE REQUIRED. WRITTEN QUOTATIONS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST FROM PSA FINANCE PLC, VERNON HOUSE, SICILIAN AVENUE, LONDON WC1A 2QQ. 0% FINANCE OFFER IS AVAILABLE TO RETAIL BUYERS AND NON-VAT REGISTERED BUSINESS CUSTOMERS ONLY AND APPLIES TO ALL 306 MODELS EXCEPT VERVE, GTI-6, CABRIOLET, ROADSTER AND ESTATE. *TYPICAL 0% FINANCE† EXAMPLE: 306 VIVANT 1.4 LITRE PETROL 5 DOOR WITH AIR CONDITIONING, ON THE ROAD PRICE* £11,950.00, DEPOSIT 50% £5,975.00, APR 0%, 24 MONTHLY PAYMENTS £248.96, TOTAL AMOUNT PAYABLE £11,949.96. ‡FRONT FOG LIGHTS, ALLOY WHEELS AND FRONT PASSENGER AIRBAG ARE STANDARD ON 1.6 LITRE PETROL 5 DOOR WITH AIR CONDITIONING PRICED AT £12,950.00 ON THE ROAD. *AIR CONDITIONING IS AVAILABLE IN LIEU OF SUNROOF AT A COST OF £350.00 AND APPLIES TO 306 VIVANT MODELS ONLY. ^CALLS CHARGED AT LOCAL RATE. OFFERS APPLY TO ELIGIBLE VEHICLES SUBJECT TO AVAILABILITY, PURCHASED AND REGISTERED BEFORE 31ST MARCH 1998

هكذا من الاصل

هكذا من الأصل

Political knives are out for me, says Connery

By Tim Hulse

THE ACTOR Sean Connery yesterday described the decision to deny him a knighthood in the New Year honours list as "purely political". Speaking from his home in the Bahamas, he also suggested that he had been the victim of "character assassination".

The saga began on Sunday when it was alleged that Connery's knighthood had been blocked following the intervention of Donald Dewar, the Secretary of State for Scotland, and one of Dewar's junior ministers, Sam Galbraith. Connery had been put forward for the honour early last year by Virginia Bottomley, the then heritage secretary. The recommendation was passed to the Scottish Office and the then Scottish secretary, Michael Forsyth, approved it. However, when Labour came to power, the process had to be repeated, and this is when Dewar is said to have stepped in.

Initially it was believed that the decision was taken as a result of Connery's longstanding and vocal support for the Scottish National Party. Only last week it was revealed that he had donated £200,000 to the party over five years. However, unnamed "government sources" have suggested alternative reasons, such as Connery's tax exile status as well as remarks he once made about violence towards women.

"I am fed up being told I don't pay taxes. I pay taxes more than most people in the UK," Connery told the BBC *Today* programme. "I don't like the turn it has taken now when they drag up something from the past about my violence towards women."

Connery provoked considerable controversy in 1993 when he told *Vanity Fair* magazine: "Sometimes there are women who take it to the wire. They are looking for the ultimate confrontation – they want a smack. It's much more cruel to damage someone psychologically. To slap a woman isn't the cruellest thing you can do."

However, Connery yesterday denied "absolutely" that he had ever said it was acceptable to hit women but admitted his comments might have been "stupid". In his opinion, the matter was purely political. "Either they or I are hoisted on their own petard," he said, referring to Messrs Dewar and Galbraith, "because if they want to do a character assassination on me, then that's their way of justifying saying they should not give it to him. That must be the purpose, I don't know. You must ask them."

When asked about the controversy on the Scottish radio station Clyde News yesterday, Mr Dewar said: "We cannot and never do explain about the honours." After saying decisions were not his "specific responsibility", he admitted that "we are sometimes consulted".

Connery, who has "Scotland Forever" tattooed on his right arm, has long been a fervent SNP supporter. In November 1996 he appeared in a party political broadcast on their behalf. His theme was the Stone of Destiny and the broadcast was deemed the party's most successful, with nearly 600 people applying for membership immediately after it.

In April last year, Connery wrote a letter of support for the campaign for Scottish independence. "Everywhere I go in the world, people want to know about Scotland and why we tolerate our affairs being run by someone else's government," he said. "If the SNP wins, so does Scotland – it's as simple as that." Connery's portrait appears, together with that of party leader Alex Salmond, on the SNP's homepage on the Internet.

At a tribute to the star in New York last May, Harrison Ford, said: "Sean does everything from Arab sheikhs to dragons with a Scots accent. As an actor, he honours his homeland every time he opens his mouth."

Leading article, page 18

Sean Connery: 'I don't like the turn it has taken when they drag up violence towards women' Photograph: Brian Harris

THE CONTROVERSIES

In 1993 Connery was subjected to allegations of racism following the release of the film version of Michael Crichton's novel 'Rising Sun', which dealt with the unscrupulous nature of Japanese corporations. It was reported that he had even received death threats, forcing him to hire two bodyguards.

Last year, the actor who has always described himself as a one-woman man, had to endure tabloid revelations of an 11-month affair with Helle Bym, a Danish journalist 23 years his junior. "At the height of passion, he would repeat the same words in a foreign language," she said. "It sounded like Arabic or possibly Gaelic."

Gay doctors to get equal treatment

By Jeremy Laurance
Health Editor

LEADERS of the British Medical Association are expected to teach their cricketing brethren in the MCC a lesson in equal rights today by allowing gay and unmarried heterosexual partners of doctors cut-rate membership of the association.

The BMA's ruling council is to vote on a proposal to allow live-in partners of either sex to qualify for the cut-rate subscription which is currently only available to spouses. However, the value of the discount is to be reduced so wives and husbands will pay more to allow unmarried partners to qualify.

Once seen as the heart of the medical establishment, populated by white-haired gents in the Dr Finlay mould, the BMA has modernised in recent years as a reforming leadership has given it a younger, more progressive outlook. Now it has bowed to pressure from its junior doctor members whose domestic arrangements would have shocked their forebears.

Only doctors may join the association but the low-price subscription has been valuable to medical couples who effectively get two memberships for the price of one and a half. In addition to a weekly copy of the *British Medical Journal*, members get legal and industrial relations advice in disputes with employers, pensions advice, cheap motor insurance and a range of other services.

The BMA has 114,000 members most of whom pay an annual subscription of around £250. About 5,000 spouses pay the lower subscription, which is reduced by 62 per cent. A further 2,000 are expected to qualify for the new cut-rate, which is to be set at 50 per cent to maintain the same level of income for the association.

Dr Jim Appleyard, BMA treasurer, said the demands for change had come from unmarried junior doctors in long-term relationships who had argued that they were being discriminated against: "We wanted to be fair to people in those circumstances and not think of gender or sexual orientation. Once they are living in a house with joint responsibility for that as a couple, we won't be judgmental on who that couple should be. I have constructed as fair a system as I can which is cost-neutral."

Both partners must be doctors and the discount would lapse if they separated and one moved out. Dr Appleyard said he "sincerely hoped" the increase in subscriptions for spouses, whose discount will be reduced from 62 to 50 per cent, would not lead to protests.

"They get incredibly good value for money," he said.

MCC DECIDES ON WOMEN

MCC, the world's most famous cricket club, was set to vote last night on whether to overturn two centuries of tradition and admit women as members.

The result was to be announced after a special general meeting of the Marylebone Cricket Club at Lord's. Expectations at press time yesterday were, that despite mounting pressure, members might once again balk at the prospect of a mixed pavilion.

When this vexed issue was last addressed, in 1991, the modernisers failed to achieve the required two-thirds majority to alter the club's constitution.

This time though, the female players and spectators who are clamouring to join have the backing of the MCC hierarchy. The club's committee has written to all members, whose average age is 57, urging them to vote in favour.

— *Kathy Marks*

Harding helicopter death blamed on pilot's confusion

THE PILOT of the helicopter in which Chelsea Football Club vice-chairman Matthew Harding died probably became disoriented just before the aircraft plunged to earth and burst into flames, an inquest was told yesterday.

Multi-millionaire Mr Harding, 42, pilot Michael Goss, 38, businessmen Tony Burridge, 39, and Raymond Deane, 43, and magazine journalist John Bauldie, 47, died instantly when the Twin Squirrel aircraft crashed into farmland near Middlewich, Cheshire, and burst into flames as it was carrying the party from a Chelsea v Bolton cup tie on 22 October 1996.

Chief air accident investigator Michael Charles told the inquest in Knutsford, Cheshire, that former army pilot Mr Goss was probably trying to do "more than was achievable" in trying to fly single-handed in poor visibility in a helicopter without autopilot and while trying to talk to air traffic control. He said new regulations on night flying were due to be introduced which would require that helicopters with single pilots should be fitted with autopilots or stabilisation devices.

Mr Goss probably became confused and might not have believed his instruments before trying to manoeuvre the helicopter without looking for visual signs outside the aircraft, the inquest was told.

Matthew Harding's widow Ruth (far left) and his mistress Vicky Jaramillo, who were both in court for yesterday's hearing
Photographs: PA

Mr Charles told Cheshire coroner John Hibbert that there was an indicator in the cockpit showing the position of the helicopter in relation to the horizon. "If he had looked at it and believed what it had told him and acted on it, there would have been no problem," he said. But it was not uncommon for pilots to get a "body sense" and convince themselves their aircraft was straight.

The jury heard a tape-recording on which Mr Goss, who had drifted off course, asked air traffic control for permission to climb to 3,000 feet before requesting a bearing straight to Manchester Airport. He was given permission to climb and was then asked what bearings he wanted for an ILS (instrument landing).

The pilot's last words were: "Yeah, I'm looking for vectors for an ILS ... I think I'm in a descent at the moment ... hold on." The aircraft is believed to have crashed moments later.

Mr Harding's estranged wife Ruth, 44, and his girlfriend Vicky Jaramillo, 26, were both in court for the hearing, which is expected to last up to four days. It continues today.

Lads on pauper's pay in 'sport of kings'

By Barrie Clement
Labour Editor

STABLE lads who work in the "sport of kings" are among the lowest paid workers in Britain, official research for the Low Pay Commission shows.

Staff who look after racehorses are paid as little as £1.98 an hour, which over a normal working year would translate into a wage of less than £4,000.

Joint bottom of the low-pay league was Axa Provincial Insurance, based in Kendal, Cumbria, the report – "Pay Systems and Pay Structures and the Relationship to Low Pay" compiled by Incomes Data Services – found. Axa Provincial claimed, however, that no one was actually paid less than £3.17 an hour.

Responding to the findings, a spokesman for the National Trainers' Federation for horseracing said that the £1.98 an hour rate applied to school leavers and was a "safety net". Many employees were paid more.

Junior hairdressers, who received as little as £2.18 an hour, are also among the poorest workers, according to the study for the commission which will advise ministers on the level at which the national minimum wage should be set.

The Government is expected to set a minimum of around £3.50 an hour at current prices for workers over the age of 24.

Cowboy truckers face fine

LORRIES operated by cowboy truckers could be impounded under Government plans to be announced today. Gavin Strang, Cabinet minister with responsibility for transport, will outline the powers in a speech to the freight industry. Officials say that some firms do not abide by safety rules and undercut more prudent rivals, and some deterrent is required. The move will require primary legislation and ministers are inclined to fine offending operators £5,000.

— *Randeep Ramesh*

Halle suspends directors

THE Halle Orchestra yesterday suspended two directors on full pay pending an inquiry into the financial affairs of the crisis-hit organisation. A spokeswoman for the Manchester-based orchestra stressed there was no suggestion that John Whibley, deputy chief executive, or Jack Whittaker, director of finance, had been involved in any illegal activity.

BBC Parliamentary coverage

DUE to a typographical error, yesterday's story about changes to the BBC's coverage of Parliament said the corporation was scrapping *On The Record*. The show being dropped is in fact the early-morning BBC 2 programme *The Record*.

NEW from BT

BT calls now start from

a minute to the USA.

www.bt.com

With BT's new Country Calling Plans save up to 43% on International Calls.

ONLY 12p SAVE 9p — BT STANDARD RATE TO USA 21p
ONLY 38p SAVE 30p — BT STANDARD RATE TO SOUTH AFRICA 68p
ONLY 22p SAVE 18p — BT STANDARD RATE TO AUSTRALIA 40p
ONLY 31p SAVE 24p — BT STANDARD RATE TO JAPAN 55p
ONLY 11p SAVE 7p — BT STANDARD RATE TO REP. IRELAND 18p
ONLY 13p SAVE 11p — BT STANDARD RATE TO FRANCE 24p
ONLY 56p SAVE 43p — BT STANDARD RATE TO INDIA 99p
ONLY 13p SAVE 11p — BT STANDARD RATE TO GERMANY 24p
ONLY 22p SAVE 18p — BT STANDARD RATE TO NEW ZEALAND 40p

For just £1 per country per month, our new Country Calling Plans give you 25% off calls to that country. Together with our Friends & Family Overseas and PremierLine discounts you could save 43% on up to 5 nominated numbers. 5 Country Calling Plans from 30 countries including Canada, Greece, Hong Kong, Israel, Italy, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Spain and Turkey can be chosen.

BT It's good to talk

Call us NOW on 0800 001 800.

PREMIERLINE COSTS £6 PER QUARTER AND IS RECOMMENDED FOR CUSTOMERS WITH CALL BILLS OVER £46 PER QUARTER. MINIMUM CHARGE 6P PER CALL. PRICES QUOTED ARE BT'S WEEKEND RATE PER MINUTE. NOT AVAILABLE ON BT CHARGECARD CALLS

Hereditary peerage is backed by Hague

By Anthony Bevins
Political Editor

A STRONG defence of the hereditary peerage was delivered last night by William Hague, Conservative leader.

Following reports that Tory resolve was weakening in the face of the Government's determination to abolish the voting rights of hereditary peers in the Lords, he attacked the Labour plans in a speech to the Centre for Policy Studies, in London.

"The Government is now embarking on what is potentially the most damaging step of all – removing the main independent element in the House of Lords by excluding the hereditary peers," he said.

"Mr Blair's justification is his dislike of the hereditary principle, although he sees no contradiction in also parading himself as the protector of the monarchy.

"Labour's plans could lead to a House almost entirely composed of nominated peers. This would be a huge and dangerous extension of prime ministerial power. It would be wholly unacceptable to the Conservative Party."

Nevertheless, Mr Hague accepted that the balance of power had changed in society, and the requirement to have a House representing the interests of property and land had "diminished". Because of that, the Conservative Party was "open to suggestions about how membership of the Lords might be changed, too, and whether the hereditary principle is the right one to employ when choosing members for the House".

Mr Hague's speech, entitled "Change and Tradition: Thinking Creatively about the Constitution", was based on the premise that once Labour's changes had taken place, it would not be possible to turn the clock back.

But the Tories would need to have their own programme of constitutional reform, to correct "the dangerous imbalances and tensions which Labour's constitutional reforms will unleash.

"We must seek the construct a set of constitutional relationships which will preserve the key, overarching principles of our existing constitution: limited government, the rule of law, the unity of the kingdom and, above all, democratic accountability," Mr Hague said.

He would be open to radical suggestions, but he said the Tories might have to think of creating an English parliament, as a response to devolution of power to Scotland and Wales, and Parliament might have to become accountable for the appointment of judges, if the judiciary was to be politicised by human rights legislation.

As for referendums, Mr Hague warned that they could amount to little more than "cosmetic democracy". He criticised proportional representation as "a profoundly undemocratic measure masquerading under the banner of democracy" – which he would "have no truck with".

Mr Hague, who also said that the ability of Parliament to hold the executive to account needed to be strengthened, urged his party to work with him to provide answers to the constitutional legacy that would be left by Labour.

The badger's friends protest (with a little help from Linda and Paul)

Sett for action: Protesters arrive at Westminster yesterday to lobby about plans to cull of 10,000 badgers Photograph: John Voos

By Stephen Goodwin
Heritage Correspondent

WITH the blood sports lobby and their rural fellow travellers due to march in the capital on Sunday, friends of the badger and the hare are getting their protests in first.

The National Federation of Badger Groups was demonstrating at the Commons against plans to cull 10,000 badgers in a five-year experiment on how to eradicate tuberculosis from cattle.

And anti-hunt campaigners demonstrated yesterday at Altcar on Merseyside on the first day of the Waterloo Cup, Britain's premier hare coursing event. An attempt was made to present a 5,000 signature petition against the sport signed by Linda and Paul McCartney to the cup host, Lord Leverhulme, but was not accepted.

The event has been held since 1836 but animal welfare groups are hopeful that this year will bring the cup's Waterloo. Hare coursing would be outlawed along with fox hunting under the Wild Mammals (Hunting with Dogs) Bill going through Parliament.

The good life? page 16

Mould cracking at last, say Lib-Dems

By Anthony Bevins

THE LABOUR and Conservative two-party mould is beginning to crack open, Liberal Democrats are to be told at their annual spring conference, at Southport, next month.

Appealing for endorsement of the party's current stance of "constructive opposition" to the Labour government, the party leadership tells representatives: "If it ain't broke, don't fix it."

In a policy paper, *No Glass Ceilings*, the party executive says that since last year's election, the Liberal Democrats have become recognised "as the most effective opposition, working with the Government in some areas to implement our long-standing objectives, and vigorously opposing them in other areas ...

"What is more, we have gained our new-found strength at a time of great fluidity and uncertainty in British politics. With divisions opening up within both the other parties ('Old' Labour and 'New' Labour, 'Euro-sceptic' Conservative and 'One Nation' Conservative) the two-party mould is beginning to crack, the paper asserts.

"The possible advent of a proportional voting system and a pluralist political settlement only goes to exacerbate these uncertainties."

Water clean up under threat

By Nicholas Schoon
Environment Correspondent

WATER bills must not be cut, MPs of all parties warned yesterday. They should be held level so that more money can be pumped into curbing sewage pollution on beaches and in rivers.

The cross-party House of Commons Environment Committee also launched a blistering attack on the two government regulators of England and Wales's water industry, Ofwat director general Ian Byatt and the Environment Agency.

Mr Byatt, said the MPs, was fixated on pushing through a price cut for water customers during the next price-setting exercise for the industry. But he was ignoring the bigger picture; that customers wanted higher standards and a cleaner environment. The Committee said it regretted "he chose to interpret his duty to customers only as protecting their pockets".

As r the Environment Agency, yesterday's report on sewage treatment and disposal suggests this is a weak green watchdog which suffers from being under-funded by government. The MPs criticised the attitude of one top agency official towards public openness as being "flippant and condescending". Their report says "one could be forgiven sometimes for imagining that the environment agency is a sub-branch of Ofwat."

The MPs found that standards for treating the 14 billion litres a day of sewage Britain produces had improved markedly since privatisation nine years ago. But that was only to be expected, since average bills to households for treatment had risen from £64 in 1989-90 to £123 this year. But there was a real need for further progress, and the Committee believes this can be achieved without price rises.

It says that by 2002, just four years away, all sewage should receive three levels of treatment which removes 99.9 per cent of bacteria in the final effluent as well as removing nearly all of the nutrients. It is this combination of nutrient feed and bacteria which does most of the environmental harm to rivers, in severe cases starving them of oxygen and wiping out aquatic life. The report points out that three of the major water companies are already committed to introducing this three-stage treatment to all their works, eventually, and says all the rest must follow.

The MPs also have grave concerns about the practice of spreading the sludge from sewage works on farmland as a fertiliser, which could potentially contaminate food with viruses and bacteria as well as building up concentrations of toxic heavy metals. This practice is set to increase because of a ban on dumping sewage sludge at sea which comes into force this year.

The Committee says that by 2002 all sewage sludge placed on farmland must undergo pasteurisation treatment which kills most of the bacteria in it. And the practice of using it as fertiliser should no longer be regulated with a voluntary code of practice. "These are tough recommendations but we believe they are realistic," says the report.

1997 'Top Direct Lender Over Two Years' – What Mortgage Magazine.

Make sure your latest mortgage statement is the last bit of bad news you get from your bank or building society.

Mortgage example of £80,000 [illegible]

Lender	APR (Variable)	Monthly Repayment (after tax relief)	Potential saving with Direct Line	Total Payable (gross)
HALIFAX	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
WOOLWICH	9.3%	£638.40	£538.68	£198,687
ABBEY NATIONAL	9.2%	£626.93	£497.04	£197,868
DIRECT LINE	8.2%	£585.51	–	£183,751

APRs based on Standard Variable Rate Repayment mortgages, [illegible] MIRAS has been calculated under current tax legislation which [illegible]

- Since January '97 interest payments have risen and risen and risen. With one phone call to Direct Line you can start to bring them down again.
- *Our* variable rate mortgage could save you around £500 a year.
- No legal fees if you transfer your mortgage without moving house using our solicitors package.
- We refund your standard valuation costs after the mortgage is set up.
- No arrangement, mortgage indemnity or early redemption fees.
- You can borrow up to 90% of the value of your home.
- So get your house in order. Call Direct Line now.

DIRECT LINE MORTGAGES

0181 649 9099 LONDON
0161 831 9099 MANCHESTER
0141 221 9099 GLASGOW

CALL ANYTIME 8am to 8pm Monday to Friday and 9am to 5pm Saturday. Please quote ref. IND185

www.directline.co.uk Direct Line Financial Services Limited, 250 St. Vincent Street, Glasgow, G2 5SH.

You must be aged 18 to 62. Subject to status. Available in England, Scotland and Wales. Security required. Written quotations on request. If our solicitor is used and the legal fees amount to more than £300, Direct Line will pay the excess up to a maximum of £280. Offer may be withdrawn at any time. Some mortgages may require payment of a fee to the existing lender when being transferred. Calls recorded and randomly monitored. Direct Line and the red phone on wheels are the trademarks of Direct Line Insurance plc, used with its permission. YOUR HOME IS AT RISK IF YOU DO NOT KEEP UP REPAYMENTS ON A MORTGAGE OR OTHER LOAN SECURED ON IT.

Buy a PC that's so advanced it's not even built yet.

If you want a PC with the very latest technology, call Gateway 2000. We'll discuss your needs, then, when you're ready, we'll build you a PC that includes the freshest technology from the world's top component makers. Gateway's build-to-order method means you pay only for what you need. The Intel Pentium II processor-based system below is just one example of what we can make for you. And its advanced technology comes with Gateway's superb after-sales service. Freephone technical support for as long as you own your GATEWAY™ system. Find out more by ringing **0800 39 2000**, not forgetting to ask about our flexible finance options.

Or visit our Showroom at 10 Bedford Street, Covent Garden, London WC2E 9HE.

G6-233

- Intel 233MHz Pentium® II Processor
- 32MB SDRAM, (expandable to 384MB)
- 512KB Pipeline Burst Cache
- 3.5" 1.44MB Floppy Disk Drive
- Mitsumi 13X min/32X max 90ms CD-ROM
- 4.3GB 10ms Ultra ATA Hard Drive
- STB® nVidia Riva 128-Bit AGP 3D Graphics Accelerator, w/ 4MB SGRAM
- 15" EV500 TCO-92 0.28dp Monitor
- ATX Desktop Case
- Microsoft® Windows® 95 105 Keyboard
- MS® Windows 95, MS IntelliMouse™
- McAfee Anti-Virus Software
- MS Office 97 Small Business Edition plus Encarta® 97 (US Version) and MS Money 97
- 3 Year Limited Warranty

£949 (£1149.15 inc. VAT & Delivery)

intel inside pentium®II

GATEWAY2000 "You've got a friend in the business."

0800 39 2000
http://www.gateway2000.co.uk

Gateway 2000 · Clonshaugh Industrial Estate · Dublin 17 · Ireland

©1998 Gateway 2000 Europe. Black-and-white spot design, "G" logo, "You've got a friend in the business" slogan, GATEWAY and GATEWAY 2000 are trademarks or registered trademarks of Gateway 2000, Inc. The Intel Inside Logo and Pentium are registered trademarks and MMX is a trademark of Intel Corporation. All other brands and product names are trademarks or registered trademarks of their respective companies. All configurations and prices are subject to change without notice or obligation. All prices quoted in Sterling. All sales subject to Gateway 2000 Europe's standard terms and conditions and limited warranty. Industry standard practice is to measure monitors using the CRT size. Actual viewing area can be approx. 1.2" less.

هذا من الأصل

هكذا من الأصل

Heroin cure may have killed six

By Steve Boggan

A VIETNAMESE herbalist who gained worldwide acclaim for inventing a "miracle" cure for heroin addiction may have covered up the deaths of up to six patients in his care.

Health officials in Hanoi have evidence that a clinic run by Tran Khuong Dan bribed at least one family to bury their son's body without informing the authorities.

United Nations sources in New York – who have launched costly trials on the "cure" – told *The Independent* yesterday that they believe more cases are being investigated, yet testing on the drug is likely to continue.

Mr Dan sprang to worldwide prominence last November when his secret formula, called Heantos, attracted the attention of the world's media. A former construction worker and herbalist, Mr Dan claimed he deliberately became an opium addict to see whether he could find a natural way to detoxify himself.

After travelling from village to village in the highlands of Vietnam, he put together a secret concoction made up of 13 plants which appeared to help some addicts kick their habit.

Although no formal evaluation had been undertaken, visiting American politicians brought the treatment to Bill Clinton's attention. Pressure was brought to bear upon specialists in addiction to investigate and the UN Development Programme reportedly allocated £240,000 to the project, with a possible £2.4m to follow.

Now, however, Mr Dan's activities have been branded illegal in Vietnam – because Heantos is untested and unlicensed – and there is a split within the UN on whether to proceed with trials.

In an interview with *The Youth* newspaper in Vietnam, Nguyen Hun Lam, vice-chairman of the Vietnamese ministry of health's drug control committee, said stocks of Heantos "illegally" produced by Mr Dan and several partners had been seized.

More disturbingly, he added: "This illegal operation led to a serious consequence causing death to [a patient] on 30 July 1997 during treatment at the Heantos Detoxification Centre. The centre management negotiated with the victim's family and offered to provide 15 million Vietnamese dong [approximately £1,500] for the family to bring the body to the village for burial without reporting the case to the local administration and relevant authorities."

There is a row between officials at the UN Development Programme (UNDP), which wants to proceed with tests on Heantos, and the UN Drug Control Programme, which is sceptical. It is understood the UNDP is refusing to pass on details of the Heantos formula to the Drug Control Programme.

"We can't say whether this thing works or not because there have been no formal tests and no follow-up work to see whether the addicts are still off their drugs," a UN source said. "We are hearing from Vietnam that there might have been as many as six deaths that had gone unreported."

Some experts suspect Heantos may contain kratom, a plant from Thailand and Vietnam which, when chewed, acts on the same brain receptors as heroin. "If that is the case, then this isn't a cure, it's a substitute and it would be no better than the methadone we give people now," said the source.

Hats off to student picture winner

STUDENT photographer Geoff Davies, from Nottingham, went one better this year than last by taking first prize in the Ucas/*Independent* student photographic competition. His winning entry *Blue Hat* (left) earns him a prize worth more than £1,300.

Runner-up was Clementine Sandison, from Gwent, with *Rich and Anne Portraits*.

The Universities and Colleges Admissions Service/*Independent* competition – run in conjunction with Jessops, Linneys Colour Print, STA Travel, and *Photo Answers* magazine – attracted more than 1,000 entries.

Winners were also chosen in four individual categories: Students at Work (Michael McMahon, *Michelle in New Library*); Student Travel (Jörg Wagner, *Itaguacu*); Portraits (Nicholas Hughes, *Moral Rights Asserted*); and On Campus (Ross Harvey, *Double Exposure Around Campus*).

Cholesterol tests unlikely to save lives

By Jeremy Laurance
Health Editor

CHOLESTEROL screening is unlikely to save lives and can be misleading or even harmful, a report says today.

People who discover they have a raised cholesterol level in their blood may even start to feel ill – simply labelling them as "high cholesterol" may cause them to "adopt the sick role".

Two-thirds of GPs offer some cholesterol testing and one survey showed that 28 per cent of people aged 45-64 had had their blood cholesterol screened in the last three years.

A review of research on the role of cholesterol in heart disease says that although it is an important factor, by itself it is a poor predictor of heart attacks. Most men who have heart attacks have a level at or below the average of 6 mmols per litre. Focusing on cholesterol may distract from bigger risks like high blood pressure.

The study, by the NHS Centre for Reviews and Dissemination, a government-funded agency, says that cholesterol-lowering drugs do save lives among patients at high risk – smokers, or couch potatoes – but are not appropriate for people whose only risk is a raised cholesterol level.

Cholesterol-reducing drugs are expensive and spending on them has risen more than fivefold since 1993 to £113m. Other drugs which can cut the risk of heart attacks, such as aspirin, are cheaper and should be tried first, the report says.

One drug, Lovostatin, is set to come off patent next year which could bring a sharp fall in its price, saving the NHS millions. But Lovostatin is only licensed in the US and its manufacturer, Merck, Sharp and Dohme, has no plans to license it in the UK because it would be a rival for Simvastatin, also made by MSD, whose patent runs until 2008.

Rail crash families must wait for justice

By Randeep Ramesh
Transport Correspondent

THE families of the seven people killed in Britain's worst rail disaster since 1988 will have to wait "for years" before the cause of the accident can be investigated.

Lawyers for the families of victims killed in the Southall crash last September say that with possible criminal prosecutions pending, it could be 18 months before a public inquiry can start and the first evidence is heard. Professor John Uff, the inspector appointed to head the public inquiry which opened and adjourned yesterday, promised everything would be done to restart the investigation as soon as possible.

But the mother of one of those killed said the delay was "unbearable". Maureen Kavanagh, 51, of Laindon, Essex, whose son Peter, 29, was killed in the crash, said it was very difficult for families to cope with the inevitable delay to the inquiry.

"This has devastated my life. Peter was my only son and I loved him. I want to see justice done," she said.

Professor Uff said that to go on with the inquiry might have prejudiced any prosecutions arising from the crash in west London. The accident occurred when a packed Great Western express train was in collision with an empty goods train.

More than 150 people were injured in the crash which, in terms of fatalities, was the worst since 35 people died in the Clapham crash in 1988.

John Hendy QC, representing 32 victims of the crash, including the families of five of those killed, told the inquiry: "It may be 12-18 months before the process of prosecution is completed." Mr Hendy called on the rail companies in the meantime to release documents to the victims' families which could help establish what happened on the day of the disaster.

CLEVER CARS FROM JAPAN.

Five foot nothing in her bare feet.

Ten foot tall in her Terios.

The new Daihatsu Terios. All the high rise visibility of an off-roader, with all the compactness and manoeuvrability of a Ford Fiesta. Complete with power steering, full-time four wheel drive, side impact bars, driver's airbag, central locking, stereo radio cassette with removable fascia and a 3 year unlimited mileage warranty. All from just £12,200 on the road. Call 0800 618 618 for details. **THE NEW TERIOS. A SMALL CAR TO LOOK UP TO.**

Car featured Terios + from £14,000 on the road. Prices are correct at time of going to press and include VAT, delivery, number plates and 12 months' road fund licence. Ref: AIN2502

DAIHATSU

THE INDEPENDENT
WEDNESDAY 25 FEBRUARY 1998

It will be the envy of the world, says Blair, a

But now we have the big top, won't it need a ringmaster?

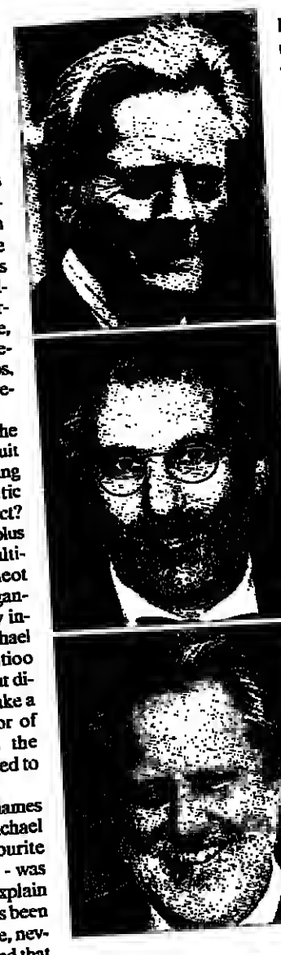
By Nonie Niesewand and David Lister

CONDUCTOR, ringmaster or creative director. Does the Dome oeed one? Yes, it needs a ringmaster, said Dome architect Richard Rogers on BBC's *Panorama*, though he now claims that soundbite was "manipulated." No, the Millennium Experience is not a circus, counters Michael Grade, chairman of the Dome's Creative Review Group. Perhaps, he suggested, Lord Rogers really meant a conductor.

Creative director? Well, the last ooe, Stepheo Bayley, quit in disgust. So, is anyone taking an artistic aod aesthetic overview of the £758m project? Or is a creative supremo surplus to requiremeots in a multi-million-pouod eotertainmeot and educational extravaganza? "There is almost a city inside the Dome" argues Michael Grade. "And if this exhibitioo is about anything, it is about diversity. It's too early to make a decisioo oo the conductor of this symphooy and end the style diversity that is needed to get into the Dome."

Nevertheless, certain names are worth watching. Michael Heseltine - always a favourite with Lord Rogers' team - was oo parade yesterday to explain that the Dome has always been a source of national pride, never a party political issue and that it always had his support. The BBC's Alan Yentob has heeo spoken of as masterminding the cootents. So have Lord Puttnam, Michael Grade himself and PR man Matthew Freud.

Lord Rogers can be forgiven, indeed supported, for wanting a creative director. As the architect responsible for all interior fittings of everything from lighting to lavatories, stairs and ramps to eotrances and exits, he oeeds to work aloogside one. First he was giveo Imagioation Gallery.



Likely contenders for the ringmaster's role: (from top) Michael Heseltine, Alan Yentob and David Puttnam

When their cootract was not reoewed, Stephen Bayley was appointed as the creative director but resigned just six mooths into the job, claiming that Peter Mandelsoo was both overbearing and too impressionable. The showbiz impresario Cameroo Macintosh was given the task of staging the centrepiece show, which he estimated would cost £230m. So he was withdrawn, retained as creative adviser and appointed in his place rock 'o' roll stage set designer the architect Mark Fisher, the man who designed The Rolling Stones's "Steel Wheels" and "Bridges to Babyloo" and "Pop Mart" for U2. He has brought his own lighting director, Patrick Woodruffe, for a sound-and-light show, with a score by Peter Gabriel.

The show will go on - and on, eight times a day. Showbiz or design-ted, the vacancy for a person with an over-view still remains. And a creative force seems esseotial for what is intrinsically a show, albeit with spiritual and educational input.

Every Thursday at the New Millennium Experience offices in Victoria, Michael Heseltine meets Peter Mandelson to review projects and control sponsors who flex their muscles. British Telecom announced they are spreading their promised £12m sponsorship to give everyooe over the age of nine in Britain a free e-mail address service and moving into a mini-dome oext door.

Yesterday, as Tony Blair stepped into the ringmaster's boots to crack the whip for new sponsorship deals - and to reveal the Dome's cootents - Lord Rogers was beside him to endorse the New Millennium Experience.

This is likely to be a 90 per ceot success story, Lord Rogers told BT, BAA, Tesco, Manpower, and BSkyB, which have contributed to the £58.8m raised for the New Millennium Experience, which is estimated to cost £153m. "The bandwagoo is beginning to roll," Mr Blair added. And it seems likely that oo December 31 1999 Peter Mandelson will still be driver, conductor, ringmaster or whatever title he wishes to give himself.

Leading article, page 18

Slice of the action: Peter Mandelson and Tony Blair with a model of the Millennium Dome at the Festival Hall yesterday Photograph: Brian Harris

Unveiling gets a mixed reception

By Rosa Prince and Chris Brown

REACTION to the unveiling of the cootents of the Millennium Dome was mixed yesterday.

Tory culture spokesman Francis Maude called oo Tony Blair to ensure the Dome and the millennium celebrations were non-political. "Is Tooy Blair big enough to declare the Milleonium Dome a politician-free zooe?" he said.

"The project has been bedevilled with cootroversy and bad publicity since Peter Mandelsoo took over last year. He is the most cootroversial party politician in the country."

Away from politics the Booker prize-winning author Ben Okri, was worried the Dome's designers had not beeo bold enough in their plans. "I would rather be proud of the Dome than oot," he said. "And I am behind it if it is oo the side of the angels. I still think it is an excelleot idea and I hope they get it right – I want it to be a success.

"But I doo't think they are being original eoough. I doo't think they are making enough of the rich cultural reserves of this nation, the land of Shakespeare, Keats, Byroo; they're oot reaching in to it eoough."

Lord Peter Palumbo, former chairman of the Arts Council, was cooocerned the exhibits would not stand the test of time. He said: "I wonder if it is likely to make a lasting cootribution. Things move oo so quickly, people could get bored."

Stepheo Bayley, who last mooth quit as creative director of the project, was critical of the plans. "Peter Mandelson tends to dismiss all criticism about the Millennium Dome," he said on BBC radio's *Today* programme yesterday. "He will say that all great national projects like the Great Exhibition and the Festival of Britain attracted their critics and, of course, he is right. But the difference is that in 1851 and 1951 the philistines were on the outside; today I'm afraid the philistines are on the inside."

Raymond Guhbay, the theatre impresario, said he was opposed to the concept of the Dome. "To be hooest I would much rather have Mendelssohn than Mandelsoo. I find the whole Dome prospect rather sad – it is a complete waste of money which could have been much better used elsewhere."

On the religious front, the Right Rev Gavin Reid, Bishop of Maidstone and chairman of the Archbishops' Advisory Group on the Millennium, said he was cautious about the proposed spiritual cootent of the Dome. But, he said: "I welcome that there is going to be material about Christianity and I'm very pleased that in a cosmopolitan world there will also be that which talks about the cootributioo of other faiths."

Trevor Phillips, chairman of the Londoo Arts Board, said the conteots of the Dome would have to be spectacular for it to be a success. He said: "We have got to have something pretty stupendous to justify it. I think people are going to come and see it just for the size of the damn thiog and there has got to be enough content for it not just to then be a terrible disappointment.

Wayne Hemingway, head of the fashion company Red or Dead, pronounced himself a fan of the Dome. "My childreo have been very excited about the Dome and provided it does not lose loads of money and lasts for a long time it can only be a good thing. It should educate and entertain kids. It has to be better than a massive art display which will just bore them."

Simon Hughes, Liberal Democrat spokesman for London, supported the Dome as long as it did oot become "a politicians' plaything".

He said: "The Liberal Democrats will support millenoium initiatives for the people. But if this Dome is for the self-aggrandisement of politicians and the commercial interests of big businesses, then it will not win the people's support."

Michael Heseltine, the former deputy prime minister who was charge of the Dome under the Tories, denied the project was party political. "Everything that Tony Blair said today is actually part and parcel of the original concept which we established. It's very important for a national event of this sort to rise above party politics."

Alex Falconer, a left-wing Labour MEP, said the money for the milleonium celebrations at Greenwich could be better spent.

"It is currently estimated that £400m of lottery mooey will be spent on this ill-founded and élitist Tory-conceived venture, and tax breaks for private sector sponsors will cost us another £50m. It should not be supported by Labour."

But Claire Ward, Labour MP and past critic of the Dome, said: "If that is only half of what they can deliver, then we are in for something quite special."

MILLENNIAL COUNTDOWN

The Dome will be built at breakneck speed to ensure it is up and running for the year 2000.
March 1998: Roof fabric will begin to be placed.
April: Plans for the layout of exhibits finalised.
June: Roof completed.
July: Ticket prices for show of the Millennium will be set.
September: Construction of the Dome structure completed.
October: The first exhibits and attractions installed.
January 1999: Businesses can buy the first tickets.
March: Structures for key attractions will be installed.
May: Central area will be completely installed.
July: Tickets will go on sale to the public.
November: Installation of the contents will be completed.
December: River services will become operational and three days of free previews for Greenwich residents will take place.
December 31: Dome will be opened.

DAILY POEM

On Oxford Station, 15 February 1997

By David Constantine

Then everything paused, it all went very quiet,
I watched a small cloud on the blue due north,
Blue that the iron tracks were levelled at,

Such blue, such quiet blue, it troubled me
Like something unimaginable that I could see
And didn't have the word for, I watched the cloud,

One white cloud on the quiet empty blue,
Light as a feather at the lips of life
Testing for breath, feeling for final proof.

Our Daily Poems today and tomorrow come from David Constantine's seventh collection, *The Pelt of Wasps*, published by Bloodaxe Books (£6.95).

A PEP that respects nature's assets, not just yours

With our new UK Ethical PEP, your money will be invested in companies seen to be making a positive contribution to society and not in those viewed as having a harmful effect on the world. You also stand to benefit from amongst the lowest charges around and you'll receive a 1% discount if you apply now. So why not consult your IFA or call us today?

0800 33 33 54

Standard Life UK Ethical PEP.
Apply before 2 April to beat the taxman.

Phone lines open Monday – Friday 8am – 6pm, Saturday, Sunday 10am – 4pm.

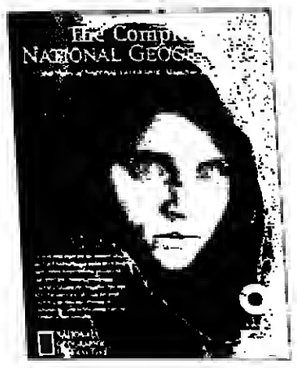
STANDARD LIFE
FUND MANAGEMENT

Investment has never been simpler

The value of investments and the income from them may fall as well as rise and an investor may not get back the full amount invested. The value of tax reliefs available on PEPs to an investor depends upon their financial circumstances. The Government intends to change the tax treatment of PEPs from April 1999. It should be possible, within certain limits, to roll-over PEPs into the new Individual Saving Accounts to continue the tax-free status. Standard Life Fund Management Limited+ is a company registered in Scotland (No 34 123322) with its Registered Office at Standard Life House 30 Lothian Road Edinburgh EH1 2DH Tel (0131) 245 2676 For your protection, telephone calls may be recorded. We may also monitor telephone calls to help us improve customer service. The Standard Life marketing group also includes The Standard Life Assurance Company* Standard Life Pensions Funds Limited** Standard Life Trust Management Limited++ * Regulated by the Personal Investment Authority + Regulated by IMRO

THE INDEPENDENT

WIN
National Geographic
'The Decades'
on CD-Rom



For nearly 11 decades, NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC magazine has fascinated and educated readers everywhere with its compelling explorations and descriptions of the natural world.

You now have the chance to view thousands of full colour photo images from award winning photojournalists covering the American West, Polar Regions and The Natural World on the new CD-Rom set available on Win 95/Mac CD-Rom.

The CD-Rom set incorporates every issue from the 1980's through to 1996 which includes the stories, page maps, graphics, biographies on NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC photographers plus classic period advertising from the past century.

Included with this CD-Rom is a robust search engine which links directly to an exclusive area on the NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC website.

We have five NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC CD-Rom sets (5 CD Rom's in a set - price £29.99) to win, courtesy of Mindscape.

To enter this competition simply dial the number below, answer the following question on line and leave your name and full address:

Q: Name the largest mammal.

Call 0930 525274

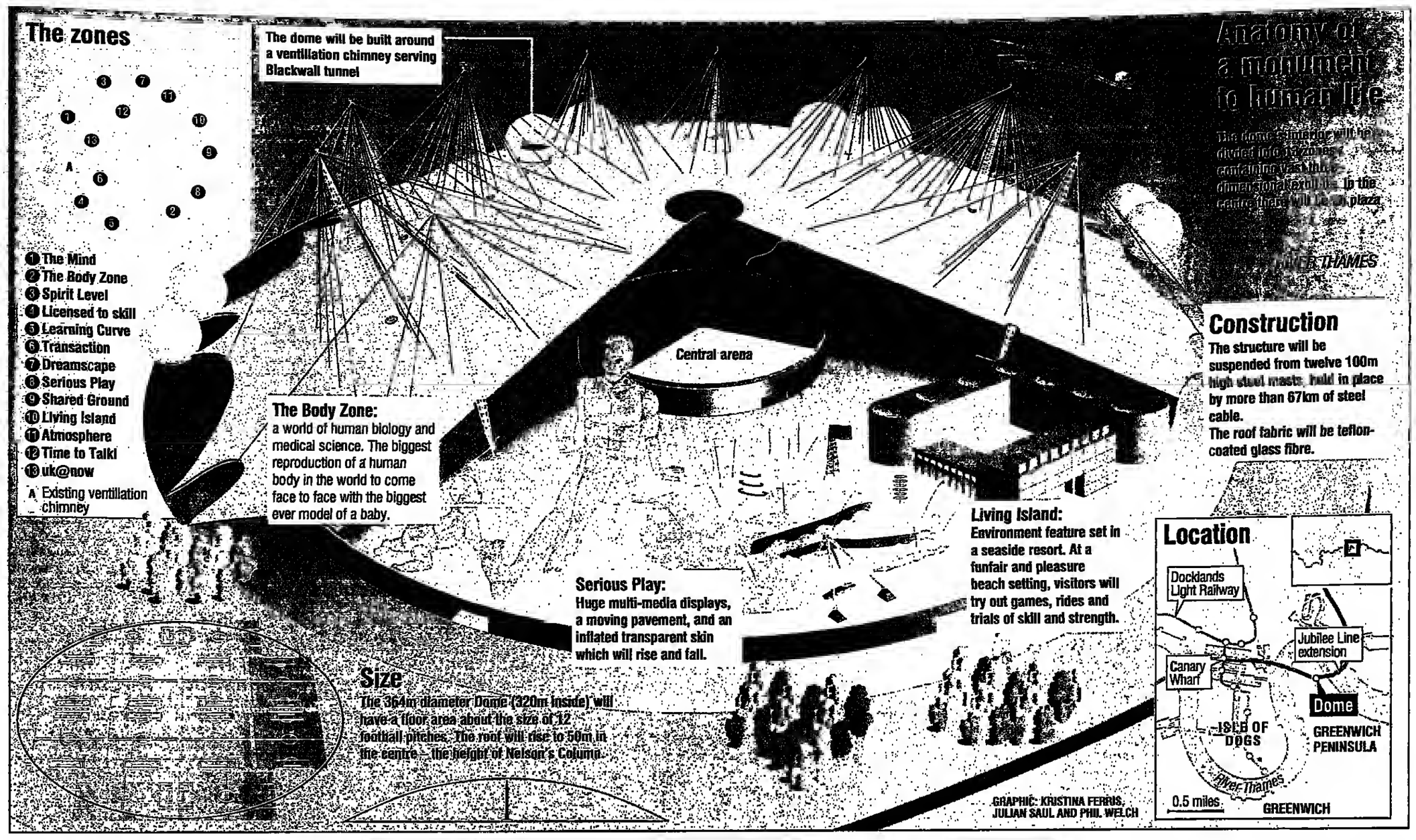
For further information on the National Geographic CD-Roms please call Infomark 01664 481562

Calls cost 50p per minute at all times. Winners picked at random after lines close 28 February 1998. Usual Independent Publishing rules apply. Editor's decision is final

هكذا من الاصل

هكذا من الاصل

Blair, as lid of Dome is finally lifted



All human life takes a trip into time

By David Lister
Arts News Editor

YOU walk into the androgynous zone: a vast human body, devoid of gender. You enter through the waist, take a lift up to the brain and exit through the ankle.

This is the Body Zone, one of 13 zones at the Dome — though one might yet turn out to be a "virtual zone". All human life is certainly here: the body, the mind, the spirit, work and play, rides and live performances. One can even glide with a dozen or so others oo a floating bed, the floater-coaster. Welcome to the Millennium Dome:

The Body Zone: Visitors are taken into the world of human binlogy and medical science inside the sitting human figure, which will be covered with pictures of children. Health reproduction and cosmetic surgery are all explored. And one exits the biggest reproduction of a human body in the world to come face to face with the biggest ever model of a baby. Family values usher in the new millennium.

Spirit Level: Here, say the Dome's managers, you will "experience a moment of peace and reflect on our deepest common beliefs".

Basically, you choose your religion, choose the appropriate garden and reflect. There will be, it is somewhat optimistically promised, "oases of calm" set within an area of garden which draws inspiration from the sheltered calm of a Christian monastic cloister, the austerity of Japanese Zen gardens and the formal exuberance of Muslim gardens.

The Learning Curve: This will feature classrooms of the future via a themed ride, and you will be able to talk to children in their schools worldwide on the Internet.

Licensed to Skill: This zone, peppered with buttock-clenchingly awful puns, looks at changing employment opportunities through multimedia galleries.

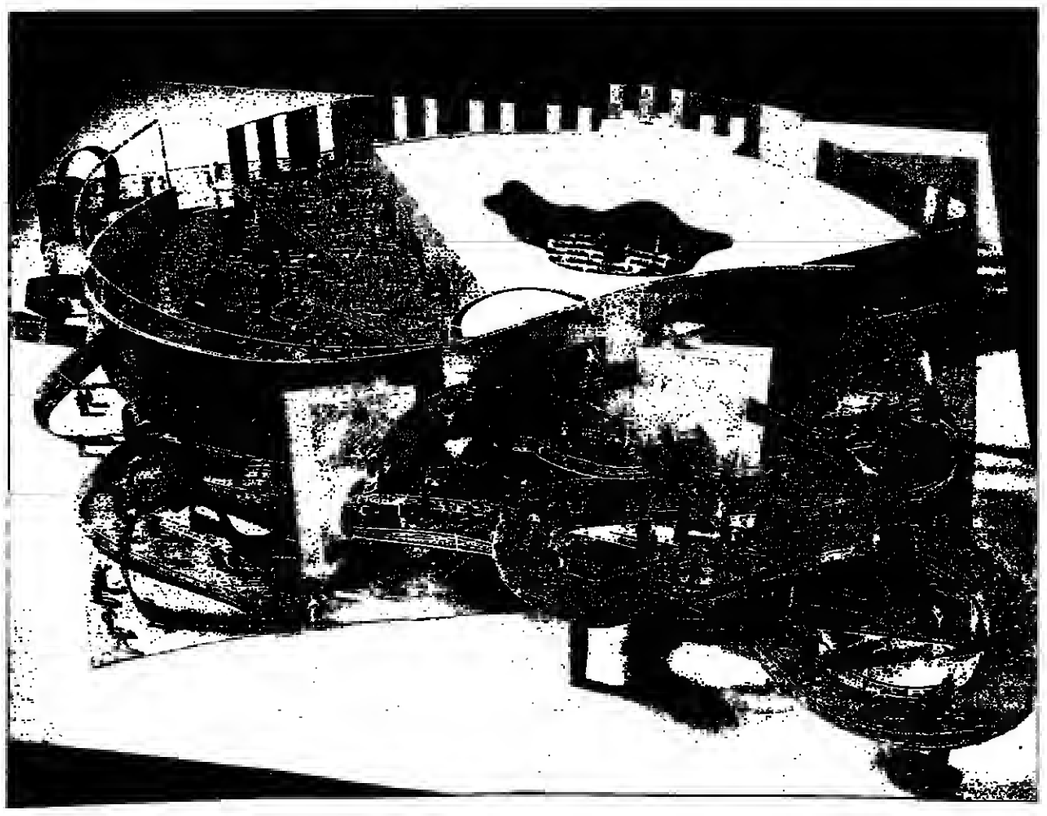
Dreamscape: Home of the "floater-coaster". The closest the Dome comes to being a health farm. This zone promotes relaxation and contemplation. Adults and children take their seats in boats which are designed as 16-seater beds, floating off through dream environments.

Serious Play: This is the most technologically animated area of the Dome. Huge multimedia displays rise towards the roof. The Parallax ride takes visitors upwards on a moving pavement. Coherent images resolve from apparently formless colours and shapes while an inflated transparent skin gently rises and falls. From the top of the ride, visitors can abseil, climb or simply take a lift down to a lower level and hands-on play activities.

Living Island: This explores our relationship with the environment through the curious location of a British seaside resort complete with beach, fish and chips stall, deck chairs, sun and sea. In a funfair and pleasure beach setting, visitors try out games, rides and trials of skill and strength. It's billed as "the environmental challenge as it has never been seen before". And who would argue with that?

Zones, on which no details have yet been released, include: Transaction, which will show how money and finance are changing your life; Shared Ground, a journey through the British Isles; The Mind, which will allow you inside the human brain; Atmosphere, in which you can experience the wonder of the planet; Time To Talk, where we learn better ways of talking to each other (an area sponsored by BT); and UK @ Now, where we apparently will learn, perhaps on the internet "what being British means for all our futures".

Other worlds: A model of the Dreamscape zone (above), home of the floater-coaster which takes adults and children in 16-seat 'beds' along a dream river through surreal landscapes – 'setting their minds free'; Learning Curve (below) concentrates on education – visitors will be able to contact children in schools all over the world via the Internet



Hi-tech displays leave a lot of space to fill

By Nonie Niesewand
Architecture Editor

THE DOME might be one of the architectural wonders of the late twentieth century, but filling the largest building of its kind in the world in the digital age is a difficult task.

The danger is that the amount of information that can be conveyed via the Internet, and using virtual reality and interactive games, will replace a lot of props and leave a lot of empty space. To compensate for the blandness of multimedia, designers will pack in over-scaled human figures, floating beds for dreamscapes and gigantic roller-coaster rides.

The Teflon-coated dome drops into place in a fortnight to cover 20 acres on the North Greenwich Peninsula. So the countdown has started to filling it with a display sufficiently thrilling to entice people from all over Britain to visit.

Visible within domed area, 320 metres in diameter, are nine segments These segments have been zoned to tell the story of time with interactive displays and exhibits chosen by 11 design teams.

When you can land a jumbo jet just by strapping on a virtual reality helmet and taking the controls, there is no need for a lot of props. There is little need for the plinths and display cabinets found in traditional museums and galleries.

At its centre, the Dome is 50 metres high, as tall as Nelson's Column. This is the "Body Zone". Here reclines an androgynous figure, 23 metres tall which is entered through its waist, for an exploration of its internal organs, and exited through the heel.

In the Environment Zone, beaches and piers tempt families for an virtual outing to contrast with the Learning and Work Zones. Four hundred virtual reality helmets in the Work Zone allow visitors to record their hopes and fears about their jobs.

The Learning Curve lets visitors surf the Internet. The Serious Play Zone will deliver sport and leisure activities on a moving pavement.

Groovy little curved pods replace the crèche with a floater-coaster ride in a bed with 15 other kids to give parents time to unwind.

The Spirit Level, as the New Millennium Experience calls the spiritual area, is currently without a sponsor, or indeed a theme. But the Lambeth Group, a multi-faith advisory body, is in consultation with New Millennium Experience team on the contents.

Brave new words of apocalyptic promise

IT's emotional, apocalyptic and can end up meaning nothing at all. The Dome has already given us a new invention for the millennium: Domespeak, writes **David Lister**.

As the New Millennium Experience unveiled some of the Dome's contents yesterday, they did so in language that, perhaps fittingly for the new millennium, seems a mixture of sci-fi movie and Blairite Cool Britannia. And, being bashful souls at the Experience, they would not own up to who had written the script.

Domespeak may be apocalyptic in its promises, " ... exhibits will open up the choices facing humankind ...", but the zones seem to have been named by a failed headline writer. One can live with Spirit Level for the religious zone, but Licensed to Skill for the world of work just does not pass the cringe factor.

Perhaps the latter was intended as a light antidote to the description of the exhibit itself. Who can say what "the animatronic orchestra of work" actually means. Presumably the same person who can answer the question describing the Dreamscape zone: "Is rest a state of stagnation, or a state of healing, recovery, preparation and regeneration?" That's a tricky one. I'll have to lie down and try to work it out.

INDEPENDENT
WIN
National Geographic
'The Decades'
on CD-Rom
Call 0930 525274

Chinese accused of selling criminals' bodies

By David Usborne
in New York

New York authorities confirmed yesterday that they had arrested two men on charges of conspiring to sell human organs for transplant, including kidneys, corneas, livers and skin, taken from convicts executed in China.

The arrests point to a lucrative trade in organs removed from Chinese convicts at their hour of execution and sold at steeply discounted prices to buyers in Western nations. The number of executions in China has risen sharply recently to about 6,000 a year.

Through the pair arrested in New York, for example, an American patient could receive a new kidney in a Chinese hospital for between $20,000 (£12,500) and $30,000, far less than would be the case in an American hospital. No questions would be asked about the origin of the kidneys.

The men, one of whom is believed to be a former public prosecutor from the Chinese province of Hainan, were snared in a sting last week. An agent of the FBI met them and pretended to be a medical executive looking to purchase organs for transplant.

The arrests may provide the US with a first documented case of what Chinese dissidents and rights organisations have been telling Western governments for years: that Peking has allowed an international trade in organs taken from inmates to grow unimpeded and even to flourish. The accused are Cheng Yong-Wang and Xingqi Fu. Prosecutors said Mr Wang described himself as a former Hainan prosecutor, while Mr Fu said he operated a New York laundry.

Among those who have long urged action against China on the issue has been Amnesty International in London. The entrapment of the men in New York was set in train by the dissident Harry Wu, who spent 19 years in Chinese prisons and is now an American citizen.

Mr Wu met the two men on 13 February, also masquerading as a potential customer. He had a camcorder concealed in a box and taped the encounter. He passed the tape to the FBI, which felt impelled to arrange its own sting.

Mr Wu said he had been told by the pair that they could get access to the organs of at least a quarter of the roughly 200 inmates who are executed in Hainan each year. In the subsequent meeting with the FBI agent the men first offered to supply just kidneys and to arrange for US patients to have transplant operations in China. They also told the agent they could provide him with corneas at $5,000 a pair and boasted that they could also offer pancreases, lungs and skin.

According to court papers, the men also assured the FBI agent that any lungs they would supply to him "would come from non-smokers".

If the charges are made to stick in court, the case could spur Washington into making a formal approach to Peking about putting a stop to the trade.

A spokesman for the US State Department told the *New York Times*: "We're naturally concerned about these allegations, and we're looking into it".

Russia's black knight makes a global move

Phil Reeves in Moscow reports on Chess City – a capital adventurer's new Utopia

BEHIND the electric gates, high walls and immense curtains that enclose the apricot-coloured mansion which serves as his Moscow residence, Kirsan Ilyumzhinov is busy refining his latest sales pitch.

He is building the equivalent of the Vatican, he announces with the cheerful air of a man imagining his own headlines rolling off the presses. His tiny new society will be a state-within-a-state.

It will have its own parliament, cabinet, prime minister and chief executive. But the focus of this brave new world is not church but sport, the intellectual battle for superiority on a chequered board. The place will be called Chess City.

Hard selling is a required skill for the 35-year-old Mr Ilyumzhinov as the obscure patch of the planet over which he rules needs all the help it can get. Until now "spin" referred to wool, a principal Soviet-era earner for the impoverished Kalmykia, one of Russia's autonomous republics. But its boyish-looking boss seems well-versed in its modern meaning.

His job is to attract global attention, and thus investment, for a semi-arid triangle-shaped territory on the steppes of southern Russia between the Volga and the Don at the top end of the Caspian Sea. With only 321,000 mostly poor inhabitants (outnumbered ten to one by sheep), the task would deter any ordinary leader.

However, Mr Ilyumzhinov is not ordinary. He has the determination of a pit bull (a popular animal in his fiefdom, where dog fights regularly pull a crowd), boundless ambition, a scornful disregard for ideology (he is both an admirer of Bill Clinton and a close friend of Saddam Hussein), and a tremendous flair for publicity. It was a combination of these characteristics that recently underlay Kalmykia's failed efforts to buy Diego Maradona for its football team, Uralon.

Chess is taken even more seriously than soccer. Mr Ilyumzhinov has issued a decree stating that all schoolchildren would study chess, according it the same status in the classroom as mathematics. He maintains that since then juvenile crime has plummeted. "Chess develops the brain, makes you industrious and diligent and able to foresee your next step", he says. Even issues of faith are overshadowed by the game in Russia's only Buddhist republic (the Kalmyks originate from central Mongolia). As one presidential aide put it: "No one gets anywhere ... unless they can play chess."

Ruthless determination is the hallmark of Mr Ilyumzhinov's curriculum vitae. A millionaire in his late twenties, with an import-export business in the last Soviet years, he won the republic's presidency in 1993 after illegally promising $100 to every voter. When he wanted to dump his legislature, he paid it to dissolve itself, ushering in one that gave him still greater powers. Opposition opinion was stifled.

The federal authorities in Moscow paid little attention. Why should they? The President was a Yeltsin loyalist, whose electorate could always be trusted, as one official wryly put it, to "vote accurately" when it came to choosing the occupant of the Kremlin.

When stories of high-living and fleets of Rolls-Royces reached their ears, tax inspectors arrived to probe his income, which he declared as $1.1m. He invited the television cameras in, entertained them generously, and gave them a prize stallion. They left without a story.

It is this street wisdom that Mr Ilyumzhinov is drawing on to pursue his dream of building a self-governing city as the forum for international chess contests. He has a missionary's zeal, being a former champion of the republic and president of the World Chess Federation, which, though there has been a split, retains its claim to be the sport's governing body. Last year, he hosted the world championship match between Gata Kamsky and Anatoly Karpov; this September, the Olympiad contest will be held in Kalmykia.

Construction of Chess City has already begun. Luxury houses are beginning to sprout on a dusty site in south-eastern Elista, the republic's modest capital. The plans include three luxury hotels, an aquacentre, homes for 5,000 people, a chess academy and a grand central square. The promotional literature foresees a Utopia – a "cradle of highest achievements of human genius".

The city, whilst still subject to republican and federal law, will have a 10-person parliament to make local laws under a "king", or mayor, and "queen", the prime minister. The president also wants it to be an economic free zone. "I want to see if it works," he says.

The development is headed by a Russian-Serb joint venture but, in the end, it is the work of a man whose creed is that of most of the ruling élite that has occupied the ruins of the Soviet Union. "I am neither communist, nor democrat. I am a capitalist," he says. In Kalmykia, that makes this particular chess fiend a king.

Opening gambit: Kirsan Ilyumzhinov (centre) and FIDE world chess champion Anatoly Karpov (right) looking on at a party as a man in traditional Mongolian costume prepares to throw a spear Photograph: Reuters

Race row simmers at SA school

Riot police fired a stun grenade to halt a confrontation between white and black parents at a formerly white high school in the South African town of Vryburg. White parents attacked black pupils with whips after 100 black students held three white school officials hostage a day earlier at Vryburg High School. Police freed the hostages on Monday. The pupils went to the administration offices to protest at the expulsion of five black students for non-payment of fees, according to the chairman of the school governing body. — *AP, Vryburg*

Kidnap hospitality

On the sixth day of a hostage standoff, kidnappers and their three UN captives shared food, wine and camaraderie while negotiators worked toward talks to resolve the crisis. In Moscow, the Foreign Ministry called in Georgia's ambassador to protest at statements suggesting "certain forces in Russia" were behind anassassination attempt against Georgian President Eduard Shevardnadze. — *AP, Dzhikhaskoni*

Kinshasa tense

Opposition militants in the Democratic Republic of the Congo called for a strike this week to protest at the banishment of their populist leader, Etienne Tshisekedi, from the capital, Kinshasa. Such a strike could lead to a clash with forces of President Laurent Kabila, who has banned political activity since seizing power in the former Zaire last May. — *Reuters, Kinshasa*

Refugee crisis

About 1,000 refugees a day are fleeing Sierra Leone's war into Liberia, the UNHCR agency said. They were fleeing fighting in the towns of Bo and Kenema between troops loyal to the military junta ousted from the capital, Freetown, a week ago and the Nigerian-led ECOMOG force. — *Reuters, Geneva*

De Niro fury

Robert De Niro, questioned this month in Paris by a judge investigating a call-girl ring, says he will never return to France, will tell his friends to stay away, plans to boycott the Cannes Film Festival and will send back the Legion of Honour. — *AP, Paris*

THE HARRODS
DESIGNER
SKI WEAR SALE.
AS ALWAYS,
STOPPING YOURSELF
WILL BE THE
DIFFICULT BIT.

From this Saturday, 28 February, even the prices will be falling in the Harrods Ski Department. For just one week, you will find up to a third off selected designer ski wear by such names as Quiksilver, Giorgio Armani Neve, Schöffel, Chiemsee and Killy. So if you are planning to hit the slopes this year, don't forget to stop by the Ski Department on the Fifth Floor. However, please exercise caution at all times. You could quite easily find yourself getting carried away.

Harrods
KNIGHTSBRIDGE

Harrods Ltd., Knightsbridge, London SW1X 7XL. Tel: 0171-730 1234.

Sombre South Korea hails its new leader

By Richard Lloyd Parry
in Seoul

KIM DAE JUNG, the former dissident and political prisoner who survived sentences of death, abduction by assassins and defeat in three previous elections, will be inaugurated as president of South Korea this morning in an atmosphere of exultation which only partly masks an atmosphere of deep national apprehension.

He is the first opposition politician to lead South Korea, a sign of political maturity that coincides with the worst economic crisis since the Korean War. Since his narrow election victory, Mr Kim has been an unofficial acting president, eclipsing his predecessor and rival, the discredited Kim Young Sam. But South Koreans have little expectation of any quick solutions to their problems.

As the new president leads a victory procession through Seoul tomorrow, the finance ministry will announce a list of merchant banks to be closed as part of a restructuring insisted on by the IMF in return for a $60bn (£38bn) rescue package. And, despite recent positive signs from North Korea, Mr Kim yesterday said the state of the South's economy means it will be at least a decade before the peninsula is reunified.

Hotels in Seoul were turning people away last night as the city filled with guests including Michael Jackson, Elizabeth Taylor and the former Philippines president Cory Aquino, an unusual phenomenon in a country which saw its economy turned upside down by the currency crisis last year. The Korean won is worth barely half what it was a year ago, and South Korea's formerly powerful conglomerates, the *chaebol*, have been crippled by paying back foreign loans which have doubled in value.

During his election campaign Mr Kim's instinct for populism got the better of him when he hinted that he would reject the unpopular deal worked out between Kim Young Sam's government and the IMF. However much ordinary South Koreans may have agreed, the markets plunged. Since his victory, however, Mr Kim has more than made amends, affirming the IMF agreement, and brokering compromises between the *chaebols* and the country's militant unions, which have traditionally supported him but now face large-scale redundancies.

Officials speak of "front-loading" Mr Kim's programme so that the most painful reforms are carried through during the new president's "honeymoon" period. This week he was officially absolved of accusations that he amassed a fortune in bribes, like two former presidents whom he released from prison. But spring is the season of protest in South Korea, as students return to universities. A fortnight ago a general strike organised by the biggest union was called off at the last minute.

Mossad chief quits over failed assassination

General Danny Yatom resigned yesterday as head of Mossad, Israel's external security service, after criticism by a commission investigating a botched attempt to assassinate a Hamas leader, Khaled Meshal, in Amman in September, writes **Eric Silver in Jerusalem**.

It found the operation flawed in conception and planning. "The head of the Mossad bears a heavy responsibility in these matters." A majority report left a decision on Gen Yatom's future to the government, but hinted that he should be dismissed. The Prime Minister, Binyamin Netanyahu, declined to dismiss him, but hoped that he would leave in summer after completing two years in the post.

The general's resignation followed a report yesterday of a mutiny among senior Mossad officers.

هكذا من الاصل

هكذا من الأصل

Clinton aide fights new Starr subpoena

By Mary Dejevsky
in Washington

The already tortuous saga of President Clinton, the White House trainee and the American legal system took another twist yesterday when the leading White House media adviser, Sidney Blumenthal, went to court to contest a summons to testify in the case. Mr Blumenthal, a close associate of the Clintons, said he was "outraged" to be called and described the subpoena as a violation of his constitutional rights as a public servant.

The independent prosecutor, Kenneth Starr, wants to question Mr Blumenthal not about the main allegation in the case – that Mr Clinton had an affair with the trainee, Monica Lewinsky, and told her to lie about it – but about a possible sub-plot. The specific allegations against Mr Blumenthal are that he orchestrated a media campaign against Mr Starr that was designed to move the spotlight away from Mr Clinton and on to the role, power and motives of the independent prosecutor.

Mr Starr is demanding that Mr Blumenthal, a former journalist, hand over records of conversations and meetings he had with reporters about the Lewinsky case. But in Washington, the very idea that Mr Blumenthal, a specialist in the art of media spin and massaging reporters, might be compelled to lay bare his strategy and methods, has been greeted with horror as it would threaten the cosy relationship between politics and media that makes the US capital tick.

The mini-contest between Mr Blumenthal and the prosecutor's office illustrates the extent to which the Monica Lewinsky case is developing into a personal confrontation between President Clinton and the independent prosecutor, Kenneth Starr, with aides and supporters ranged on either side. The Clinton camp, led by Hillary Clinton, regards Mr Starr as politically motivated – out to get the President by fair means or foul. They have accused his office of allowing, if not encouraging leaks of evidence damaging to Mr Clinton.

Mr Starr's supporters contend that he is only doing the job he was appointed to do: investigate allegations about the legality of Mr Clinton's conduct, first in the Whitewater land deal in Arkansas, and more recently in the Lewinsky case. Some of his recent moves, however – whether or not they were projected through Mr Blumenthal's lens – have attracted widespread opprobrium.

They include the aggressive questioning of Monica Lewinsky's mother, Marcia Lewis, about her daughter's relationship with the President. Ms Lewis broke down after two days on the stand and her lawyer is now petitioning for her to be relieved of any further obligation to testify on grounds of ill-health. The decision to have a mother testify about her daughter, while quite legal, has been condemned.

But harsh and distasteful methods have not been the exclusive preserve of the prosecutor's office. The *Washington Post* has given details of the line of inquiry being pursued by Mr Clinton's defence team in the sexual harassment case brought by Paula Jones. According to the *Post*, every aspect of Ms Jones's private life is being investigated. Former lovers, colleagues and employers have been turned up, all directed at presenting her as promiscuous and unreliable. That trial is set to come to court in Arkansas in May.

Back in Washington, the Clinton team may not be displeased with the multiplying subplots in the Lewinsky investigation, despite Mr Blumenthal's indignation. They serve to delay the star appearances in the case – expected testimony from Ms Lewinsky herself and perhaps also from Mr Clinton – and keep the public happily distracted.

The current mood – more redolent of a spectator sport than lofty legal argument – was summed up in reactions to a suggestion from Ms Lewinsky's PR-minded lawyer that his client was running out of money and needed a legal fund. Laughter, rather than tears, was the public response.

Super-scribe genius, or baleful manipulator?

Depending on who you talk to, Sidney Blumenthal is a media genius or a malign manipulator, writes Mary Dejevsky. In the White House, where he is a reportedly highly paid communications aide, he is a resented parvenu or a valued member of the team.

A longtime journalist, as a reporter for the *Washington Post*, *New Republic* magazine, and most recently *The New Yorker*, he is a close associate of Hillary Clinton. It is she, the word goes, who recruited him to the White House last June, after a flurry of rumours that he was leaving *The New Yorker*.

Aged 49 and a Chicago native, he is seen as a staunch supporter of the Clintons, prompting the quip that when he joined the White House staff he would be paid for doing what he had previously been doing for free. He is an Anglophile, credited with "discovering" Tony Blair in a profile for *The New Yorker* and smoothing the first encounters between the Clintons and the Blairs.

In the Washington political context, he is regarded as an intellectual. He has been given responsibility for millennium celebrations and has adopted the cause of press freedom around the world as a personal crusade. This sideline could stand him in good stead as he grapples with what could become a landmark legal case. He is suing an exponent of Internet journalism, Matt Drudge – who broke news of the Lewinsky allegations – for $30m (£18m) for insinuating that he beat his wife. The report appeared on Mr Blumenthal's first day at the White House and he sees the allegation as a deliberate smear. The White House is backing him in his suit, which could establish whether reports on the Internet are subject to the same laws of libel as other published material - a subject that may be of as much interest to the President as to his adviser.

Sidney Blumenthal: Never fails to elicit strong feelings

Luciano Pavarotti with Aretha Franklin and members of the group Boyz II Men in New York yesterday, after the opera singer was named Person of the Year by the charity Musicare for his philanthropy Photograph: AFP

Florida counts cost of tornado disaster

By Phil Davison
in Miami

President Bill Clinton will today tour a tornado-ravaged belt of Florida, close to Walt Disney World, where a dozen twisters killed at least 38 people within a few minutes in the small hours of Monday.

The death toll made the disaster worse, in terms of human life, than Hurricane Andrew which devastated Miami and southern Florida in 1992, killing 32 people, including some in Louisiana and the Bahamas. More than 250 people were injured in Monday's catastrophe in the Orlando area and dozens, mostly mobile home owners, were still unaccounted for.

Florida tourism officials were counting their blessings that the chain of tornados narrowly missed the region's popular tourist draws – Disney World, Sea World and the Universal Studios theme park. No tourists would have been at those sites when the twisters tore through the area around 1am on Monday but photographs of the probable damage to their world-renowned installations would have been devastating to tourism, officials admitted.

As it turned out, all were open for business as usual yesterday, with laughing children enjoying the rides and attractions on a hot, sunny day.

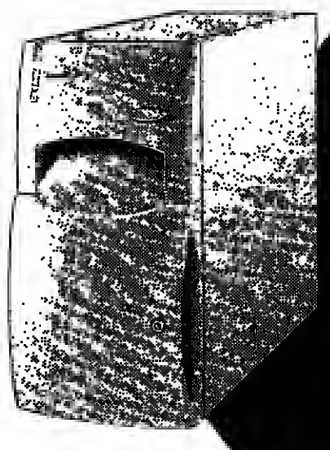
Many left homeless complained of the lack of warning. Officials said warnings went out on local radio and television stations but that most people were already asleep. In addition, the tornados, unlike the slower-moving phenomena seen in the Hollywood movie *Twister*, came virtually out of nowhere, hit the ground quickly and moved on, they added.

Dusk-to-dawn curfews were put into effect in damaged areas to prevent looters yesterday and local county officials invoked emergency laws to stop profiteering in generators, batteries, water and food. Hospitals appealed for blood to help treat the injured.

While most casualties were in mobile home parks hundreds of fixed homes, mainly wooden, were torn apart, with cars and pick-up trucks sucked up and dumped into living rooms.

Serves you right (If you buy the wrong server)

Choose the Apricot FT1200 and you get power and performance at the right price



266MHz Pentium II processor with dual processor support
512KB L2 cache
32MB ECC SDRAM
4GB Ultra Wide SCSI hard disk
- up to 36GB internal storage
- up to 90GB using external drive cabinet
Dual integrated Ultra Wide SCSI controller
x16CD-ROM drive
Microsoft Windows NT Server v4
Available as a competitively priced option

Get it right. The Apricot FT1200 server from Mitsubishi Electric has a class leading specification that leaves most other servers at the bottom of the class. It packs power and performance in a well angineered packaga that represents the best value on tha market – £1,599 + VAT.

Just check out the specification.

With a powerful 266 MHz Pentium® II processor plus room for one more and a standard drive capacity of 4GB, expandable to 90GB, it serves up all tha power necessary to expand with your business. SDRAM – the latest memory technology – gives an extra edge adding 20% to vital memory performance.

The only thing wrong with the Apricot FT1200, is that this great value offer can only last until 31st March, 1998. So hurry. There's simply no excuse to buy the wrong server. Right?

The highest spec server in its class, at a class leading price – £1,599 + VAT or lease for £13.22* a week

Offer ends 31st March, 1998

Call us now on 0800 212 422
or check out our website for more information
www.mitsubishi-computers.com/in
(Irish Republic 1800-333 600)

MITSUBISHI ELECTRIC
COMPUTERS FOR A CONNECTED WORLD

Offer closes 31.3.98. Offer valid while stocks last, on participating Mitsubishi resellers only. All trademarks acknowledged. The Intel Inside Logo and Pentium are registered trademarks and MMX is a trademark of Intel Corporation. Prices and specifications correct at time of going to press. E&OE. All prices quoted in Sterling. Specifications are liable to change. Prices shown are for the hardware, software and Internet services above, your Mitsubishi reseller will provide quotations for installing and integrating your system. *All prices quoted are exclusive of VAT (unless otherwise stated). Lease prices are based on a standard 3 year term with quarterly payments. Credit subject to status, available for business use only. Mitsubishi Electric PC Finance is a trading division of Dana Commercial Credit Ltd.

A £5,000 LOAN FOR ONLY £89 A MONTH

power yourself with a Mercantile Credit Loan

With a Mercantile Credit loan, you not only get good value but also the certainty of a fixed rate – whatever happens to interest rates in the future.

Amount of Loan	Monthly Repayment By Term			
	36 Mths	80 Mths	84 Mths	APR
£5,000	£166.89	£111.87	£88.95	12.9%
£10,000	£333.46	£223.84	£178.00	12.9%

You can borrow anything from £500 to £15,000 and we'll give you up to seven years to pay us back. You don't need any deposit or security. We'll give you a quick decision.

And we're open every day of the week, from 8am to 9pm weekdays and 9am to 7pm on weekends.

So, if you are over 25, in regular employment and have an annual income of £10,000 or more, make that free phone call now!

PHONE FOR A FAST LOAN – QUOTING REF 8544
0800 111 777

MERCANTILE CREDIT

Please empower me today by sending me details of your direct personal loans. (Send completed coupon to Mercantile Credit, PO Box 117, FREEPOST SEA 0521, Crawley, West Sussex RH10 2BR. No stamp required.)

Name 8544
Address
Postcode Telephone

BARCLAYS BANK PLC TRADING AS MERCANTILE CREDIT, REGISTERED OFFICE 54 LOMBARD STREET, LONDON EC3P 3AH. REGISTERED IN ENGLAND REG. NO. 1026167. BARCLAYS BANK PLC IS A MEMBER OF THE BANKING OMBUDSMAN SCHEME. LOANS ARE NOT AVAILABLE TO PERSONS UNDER 25 YEARS OF AGE SUBJECT TO STATUS. PLEASE NOTE THAT SOME CALLS MAY BE RECORDED OR MONITORED FOR TRAINING PURPOSES. MERCANTILE CREDIT, FREEPOST, PO BOX 261, LIVERPOOL L69 8EJ. WRITTEN QUOTATIONS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST FROM THIS ADDRESS. TYPICAL EXAMPLE LOAN OF £5,000 REPAID OVER 84 MONTHS, MONTHLY REPAYMENT £88.95. TOTAL REPAYABLE £7,471.80. THE APR IS FIXED AT 12.9%.

Blair ties British colours to the US mast

Prime Minister pledges support for future military action as crisis cements 'special relationship'. **Colin Brown** reports

TONY BLAIR yesterday signalled that the crisis over Iraq had cemented a closer relationship between himself and President Bill Clinton by telling MPs he "thanked heaven" for the readiness of the United States to "stand up and be counted".

The Prime Minister said the crisis had shown that Britain was "strong with the United States, strong in Europe". And he made it clear Britain would back America in an air strike on Iraq if it became necessary.

The warmth of the Prime Minister's praise for the lead taken by the United States when he briefed MPs on the diplomatic deal signed by Saddam Hussein and Kofi Annan, the Secretary General of the UN, caused Labour MPs who had opposed the war to shake their heads in disagreement.

Mr Blair was unequivocal in his backing for Mr Clinton, and he denied it would disrupt Britain's relations with its European partners, in spite of their apparent reluctance to support air strikes.

"I am proud of the fact that Britain has a good and strong relationship with the United States of America. Thank heavens that the Americans are there and willing to stand up and be counted when there are difficult situations that arise in the world," Mr Blair said.

He added: "I personally believe it is important that we have an American administration and an American people who are not isolationist but will to take on responsibilities. I further believe that the strength of our relationship is in no way an impediment to Europe acting in a more concerted way, so Britain is strong with the US, strong in Europe."

Stressing the threat of force had been essential to make Saddam back down, Mr Blair told MPs if the Americans supported a strike he would back them. "I am pleased to say we have had a united position. I am sure that would continue to be the case."

While avoiding triumphalism, Mr Blair said the UN would "do what we can" to assist the opposition forces in Iraq to undermine Saddam. He also told MPs concerned about the shortages of food and medical supplies in Iraq that the UN was "looking at ways in which we can bypass the Iraqi regime and do more in that regard".

In his statement, Mr Blair said: "While the agreement signed in Baghdad is welcome, it is not in itself enough." Saddam remained "an evil, brutal dictator", he said. "We will not tolerate any repetition of the Iraqi behaviour which has led to this agreement. We are not going to play more elaborate diplomatic games that allow Saddam Hussein to thwart the inspections regime which has now been agreed."

William Hague, the Tory leader, joined MPs on all sides in congratulating the Government on its firm stance. He told Mr Blair: "We have always made clear our undivided support for the position of the Government and of the US."

• Paris (AP) — The French Prime Minister Lionel Jospin yesterday endorsed the agreement reached with Iraq. He told the French parliament that France, which pushed for a diplomatic solution since the stand-off began, would give the accord its approval. "This agreement responds in a satisfactory way to the expectations of the international community and will enjoy the support of France," Mr Jospin said.

What the UN and Baghdad agreed

Key points in the agreement reached between UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan and Iraqi Deputy Prime Minister Tariq Aziz

■ The government of Iraq has made a written commitment to provide "immediate, unrestricted and unconditional" access for UN inspectors to all sites suspected of making weapons in Iraq. If fully implemented, this should allow international inspectors to find and destroy all chemical, biological and nuclear weapons; find and destroy the missiles to deliver those weapons; and to institute a system for long-term monitoring to make sure Iraq does not build more.

■ The agreement applies to all sites in Iraq, including eight disputed presidential palaces, which were among areas to which UN weapons inspectors previously had been denied access.

■ Senior diplomats will be appointed by the UN Secretary-General in consultation with the UN Special Commission for Iraq and the International Atomic Energy Agency to accompany weapons experts inspecting the eight palace sites. No deadline or limits on the number of visit to the sites are included in the agreement.

■ The "special group" appointed by Mr Annan will operate under the established procedures of Unscom and IAEA as well as under "specific, detailed procedures which will be developed, given the special nature of the presidential sites, in accordance with relevant Security Council resolutions." There was no indication in the document what those as yet undeveloped procedures will entail, a potential trouble-spot.

■ The UN reiterated the commitment of all member-states to respect Iraq's sovereignty and territorial integrity.

■ While there were no time lines for lifting economic sanctions imposed by the UN more than seven years ago, the agreement says that lifting them "is obviously of paramount importance" to the Iraqi people and the Iraqi government.

■ The agreement notes the progress achieved by weapons inspectors in various disarmament areas, and the need to intensify efforts in order to complete its mandate. The Security Council has said that once completed, sanctions could be lifted. Towards the goal of finishing the task, the document says the UN and Iraq agree to improve their co-operation and efficiency.

Caught in the middle: An Iraqi boy sitting between a soldier and a woman holding a portrait of Saddam Hussein at a demonstration of 300 people outside the United Nations headquarters in Baghdad yesterday Photograph: Reuters

Misery and hardship: the darker side of UN sanctions

Children are dying as doctors find it impossible to buy drugs to cure them. By **Robert Fisk** in Baghdad

Not long before Christmas last year, UN Assistant Secretary General Denis Halliday – the bearded and balding Irishman who heads the UN's oil-for-food programme in Iraq – paid a visit to four small Iraqi children suffering from leukaemia in the Saddam Hussein City Hospital.

"The doctors told me they couldn't get the drugs to treat them and I got involved with them," Mr Halliday says in his cramped Baghdad office, the walls hanging with cheap Arab rugs. "With a World Health Organisation colleague, I managed to get the drugs they required – some from Jordan, one from northern Iraq, which means it was probably smuggled in from Turkey. Then I dropped in on Christmas Eve to see the children in their ward. Two were already dead. You know, the doctors who look after these children are incredible characters – you can imagine the effect on them of not having what they need to heal their patients."

Mr Halliday is palpably torn by his task of distributing food and medicine to 23 million Iraqis, all of whom are being punished and some of whom are being left to die in appalling hospital conditions because of Iraq's refusal to submit to full UN arms inspections. At the same time as he was seeking drugs for the leukaemia children, Halliday wrote an impassioned letter to UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan, complaining that what the UN was doing in Iraq was causing untold suffering to innocent people.

"I wrote that what we were doing was undermining the moral credibility of the UN," he says. "I found myself in a moral dilemma. It seemed to me that what we were doing was in contradiction to the human rights provision in the UN's own charter." It was Halliday's idea to permit Iraq to export more oil – to increase it from US $2bn every six months to $4bn. "I started selling the idea to the Russian, Chinese and French ambassadors here and they were quick to take it up and convey it to their capitals. The fact that this was accomplished makes my conscience a bit easier."

But Iraq, whose UN sales are strictly monitored – 30 per cent goes to compensate individuals, companies and countries which suffered from Saddam Hussein's 1990 invasion of Kuwait – has not been allowed to use its oil income to repair or maintain the decrepit and war-damaged machinery in its oil fields. Allowed to export more oil – it might have been permitted to sell more than $5bn every six months – it is deprived of the means of doing so. When Mr Halliday accompanied Mr Annan to see the Iraqi Vice President Taha Yassin Ramadan at the weekend, Mr Ramadan complained bitterly that he had no spare parts to increase the oil flow.

Now a commission of experts is to enter Iraq to see how much it will cost to restore Iraq's pumping and refining facilities. But a far more terrible fate awaits the Iraqi people. With its electrical power stations producing less than 40 per cent of capacity, water and sanitation systems are on the point of breakdown. Hospitals in Basra are filthy, their doctors forced to re-use rubber gloves during operations, their wards without air conditioning or clean water. Without electrical pumps, water is falling in the pipes and sewage is being sucked into the vacuum. To restore full electrical current will cost a further minimum $6bn.

"The government here used to encourage the use of infant formula, and infant formula with contaminated water is a real killer," Mr Halliday says. "In the south, water and sanitation have broken down. Some of the damage was done by American bombing [in 1991], probably other damage during the Iran-Iraq war. The reason the Iraqis were slow to move on the oil-for-food programme [it was almost two years before Iraq agreed to the system] is because they see this as a national humiliation. They're being given handouts, and it's their own money."

Mr Halliday is a Dublin-born Quaker who worked in Kenya and Iran before joining the UN's bureaucracy in New York; and he is a man who has no great trust in the sanctions which he is helping to impose. "I think the international community has got to find some alternative to sanctions,"

> 'The government here used to encourage the use of infant formula, and infant formula with contaminated water is a killer'

he says. "... we need to find a way of separating the leadership from the people. One way is to stop arms sales. If there could really be control on sales of arms, there could really be controls."

Most of the rejected Iraqi industrial requests are turned down by the UN because of possible dual purpose use. "The Iraqi director general of railways was telling me the other day that he ordered some spare parts for his diesel locos in 1988 and paid 4 million French francs for them. Because of the sanctions, he hasn't got them yet. It's a typical dual purpose problem – trains can be used to transport soldiers." Area electric power generators in Iraq are desperately in deed of turbine parts, each of which has to be custom-manufactured. The UN has been delaying supplies.

But Mr Halliday worries more about the long-term future of Iraqis, those who survive the UN's punishing sanctions. "There are men and women now in their 20s and 30s and 40s who have known little more than the Iran-Iraq war, the Gulf war and the sanctions. They see themselves as surrounded by unfriendly people, and a very unsympathetic America and Britain. They are out of touch ... They have no access to Western television. And these are the people who are going to have to run this country in the future. They are feeling alienated and very Iraqi-introverted. Their next-door neighbours are going to have a tough time dealing with these people."

Air-strike force remains on alert

By Raymond Whitaker
in Ahmed al-Jaber airbase, Kuwait

"I AM not going to let my folks change their commitment until Saddam Hussein complies with the written words of the agreement he has made," said Colonel Kevin Smith, commander of the US Air Force's 49th Operations Group, which includes all the 12 Stealth fighters in Kuwait. "We can't afford to relax our commitment. The people here hope we don't have to maintain this military build-up indefinitely, but they're also realistic. He hasn't followed through yet."

Behind him crouched one of his Stealths. "This is a national treasure," said Colonel Smith. "We won't sell it to anybody. This is the one we trust to go against the heaviest defences, last time it attacked all the important targets around Baghdad." That was during the Gulf war in 1991, which drove President Saddam out of Kuwait but left him in power in Iraq, still trying to develop weapons of mass destruction and conceal them from United Nations inspectors.

For the moment, following the agreement signed in Baghdad on Monday, it seems that force will not have to be used again. The military build-up in the Gulf is continuing, however: extra American troops, now expected to number 10,000 rather than the 6,000 previously announced, continue to arrive in Kuwait, and the destroyer HMS *Nottingham*, part of the Royal Navy contingent at sea, docked here yesterday to take part in celebrations of the seventh anniversary of the liberation of the country tomorrow.

At Ahmed al-Jaber air base, the apron is crammed with US and Kuwaiti aircraft – Stealths, F-18 fighters with their distinctive V-shaped tails, F-16 fighter-bombers and A-10 "Warthog" tank-busters, which wrought havoc on Iraqi armour in 1991. There is no room for any more, and equipment and supplies have to be unloaded on a taxiway. Lieutenant-Colonel Dick Rayburn, 49, a Vietnam veteran, has been in Kuwait two weeks and has already been over Iraq five times in his F-16, enforcing the southern "no-fly" zone. "I don't know how long we'll be doing this, but I expect it'll be a while," he said.

Much the same comment comes at a more senior level when it is asked how long the augmented American and British forces will remain in the Gulf. "The importance of the military build-up doesn't stop because of a news report," said a US military spokesman. Off the record, however, it is intimated that the commitment could remain close to its present level for several months. Although Kuwait is paying the running expenses of the forces on its soil, the extra cost to the US taxpayer is estimated at around $200m a month, and it will be important to maintain public support at home as the immediate crisis fades.

"The best way to use force is to show it without having to use it," Kofi Annan said on his return to the UN yesterday, and Colonel Robert Awtrey, the most senior USAF officer in Kuwait, was keen to do just that. "I want to show you the combat capability we have here," he said. "While we are happy a diplomatic solution may be in the works, obviously we are all concerned to make sure it's a long-term solution."

Back at the apron, Major Reid Christopherson was showing off the destructive power of the A-10, which can fire 60 foot-long shells a second. "Everyone's very relieved that it's being resolved diplomatically, because we'd rather be deployed as a peaceful deterrent than fight. Certainly, though, this gives the appearance of being a long-term commitment."

Deal allows weapons inspectors to stay, but only if they brush up their manners

By David Usborne
in New York

AT THE heart of the agreement negotiated by Kofi Annan, the UN Secretary General, with the leadership in Iraq, is a carefully-weighed and vital equation: Unscom, the Special Commission established after the Gulf war in 1991 to root out biological, chemical and nuclear weapons of mass destruction in Iraq, will keep its job. But how it goes about its business will change.

As far as Britain and the United States were concerned, the survival of Unscom was a *sine qua non* of any new arrangement struck with Saddam Hussein. Indeed, Sir John Weston, the British ambassador to the UN, said after yesterday's consultations with Mr Annan that he would be advising London first and foremost that the work of Unscom would "remain at the centre of the process" of weapons inspection.

Moreover, it looks as though the man in charge of Unscom since last summer, the former Australian ambassador to the UN, Richard Butler, will retain his post, at least for the time being.

Iraq has made no secret of its disdain for Mr Butler, and there had been doubts even in the Security Council about the wisdom of allowing him to continue his work.

No one, however, expects Unscom to continue exactly as before.

Most obviously, Mr Annan has agreed with Saddam that when it comes to inspecting the eight presidential sites that were at the root of the latest crisis, the Unscom inspectors will no longer be allowed to do the sniffing alone. Instead, they will have to be accompanied by diplomats from member countries of the Security Council.

Members of this new subgroup of Unscom will be chosen by Mr Annan and will be headed by a new commissioner, who will also be appointed by the Secretary General.

More subtle, however, is the message contained within paragraph two of the agreement: that the UN – and by extension Unscom – will try harder to "respect the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Iraq".

This is one part of the agreement that was giving the United States administration pause for thought yesterday. Washington is fearful that it will provide Saddam with a loophole to impede the actual implementation of the pact.

But Mr Annan was clear in his press briefing yesterday about what he thinks the provision means: Unscom must brush up its manners. "We on the UN side have to handle Iraq and the Iraqis with a certain amount of respect an dignity and not push their weight around."

Private health cover from 44p a day.
Call 0800 77 99 55 to find out more.
Prime Health
A member of the Standard Life Group
Ref M10537NG

WORLDCOVER
ANNUAL TRAVEL INSURANCE
CALL US ON 0800 365 121

7%* INSTANT ACCESS
The ad may be small, but the interest rate isn't.
For more details on the Instant Access Savings Account that offers a consistently high rate of interest, please ring free on 0500 804 804.
BANK OF SCOTLAND BANKING DIRECT
0500 804 804

هكذا من الأصل

Exit stage left: the big cheese of people's theatre

Thanks to one man's vision, theatre has thrived in the Potteries and a community has found its voice. **Jeffrey Wainwright** bids farewell to a well-rounded talent

The evanescence of theatre means that memories can rarely be held up to scrutiny. They are often sketchy, and hindsight might not grant them any great significance in theatrical history or even within their immediate context. Many of my first, and so most important, recollections date back to the early 1960s and to a temporary theatre-in-the-round in the Town Hall, Newcastle-under-Lyne. It was there that I saw the petrifyingly sexy Dona Martyn as Strindberg's *Miss Julie*, and some hilarious new comedies by "Roland Allen", who doubled as the company's leading actor, one Alan Ayckbourn.

In 1962 this magical little arena re-established itself in a converted cinema, the Victoria, across the border in Stoke-on-Trent – a space that soared into immensity one night as Ron Daniels and Fiona Walker "let time try" their love as Orlando and Rosalind. That, Peter Cheeseman recalls, was when actors could rarely sing properly, and so a young Ben Kingsley as Amiens was a prodigy.

I remember too the anxiety on the face of Christopher Martin as a young pikeman awaiting the Royalist cavalry charge at Naseby in *Staffordshire Rebels*, the second of the "musical documentaries" that were to make the Vic's reputation. Daniels, Kingsley, Robert Powell and Anton Vogel were also in the cast, but somehow I best remember Martin, whose connection with the Vic still continues today, singing out "The gentry are all round, stand up now, stand up now."

The vision of that first theatre-in-the-round belonged to the late Stephen Joseph (after whom Ayckbourn was to name his Scarborough base), but when all immediate hope of a purpose-built theatre disappeared, it was Peter Cheeseman who, in 1962, founded the Vic. He has been director there ever since and will have over 140 productions to his name when his valedictory production of *The Tempest* opens next month.

No one in regional theatre comes close to Cheeseman in terms of long-term devotion to a single theatre and to its place in its own community. Having found his patch in the Potteries, he has stuck to three commitments: performances in the round; a strong repertoire of classics and new work; and close identification with the history and present problems of North Staffordshire.

The first of these meant that in 1986 the district gained Europe's first purpose-built theatre-in-the-round, 605 seats within a handsome octagonal building. There were some, Cheeseman recalls, who had said, "You'll want a proper theatre now, Peter," but he had the authority and experience to insist on what turned out to be as fine a space as any in the country.

Along with the standard of actors – they can all sing now – Cheeseman thinks that repertoire has been the area of greatest improvement in regional theatre in his time. He is unsentimental about the "drivel" of old-style weekly rep – "all thrillers and West End comedies". His first season, 1962-63, featured five new plays, including work by Ayckbourn and Alan Plater, along with Beckett, Pinter, Anouilh and Bolt. Twenty years later the mix was much the same: new work from Peter Terson and Ken Campbell alongside *Mother Courage*, *The Merchant of Venice* and *Pygmalion*. Astoundingly, up to 1986 over 40 per cent of the "old" Vic's shows were new work.

Opening nights crackled with the electricity of real antagonists watching themselves portrayed on stage – and watching one another across the auditorium

But Cheeseman and his theatre are best known for the 11 documentaries on local history and local issues. Besides *Rebels*, the historical ones have dealt with the pottery and mining industries in the area, Methodism, the Second World War, and the federation of the Six (not five) Towns. Most celebrated of all was *The Knotty*, with its famous surveyors' pole-dance illustrating the branching of the railway across North Staffs.

In 1974, *Fight for Shelton Bar!*, a contribution to the struggle to keep a local steelworks open, was the first on topical issues. The opening nights of *The Dirty Hill* (1990) – arguing both sides of a proposal for an open-cast site – and *Nice Girls* (1993) – on the efforts of women to save Hem Heath colliery – crackled with the special electricity of the real antagonists watching themselves portrayed on stage – and watching one another across the auditorium.

Cheeseman has always seen these shows as "the most useful political job the theatre can do – to reflect the life of the district in such a way that we, its voters in a democracy, really believe that we are important and that important things happen here".

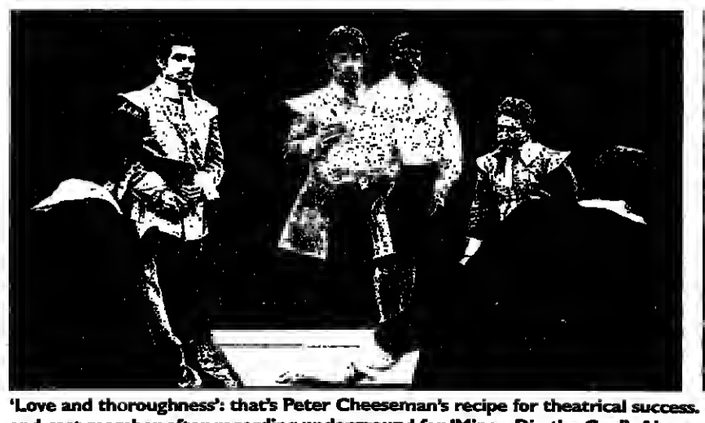
In subject-matter the documentaries never much bothered to interest anyone beyond Uttoxeter (though several were in fact invited abroad) but formally they advanced enormously one of the major styles of post-war theatre. Cheeseman himself makes no great claim for this and honours a variety of inspirations, especially the American "living newspaper" theatre, Joan Littlewood's *Oh, What a Lovely War*, Charles Parker's magnificent radio ballads, the episodic and mixed-media style of Brecht, and, above all, the cinema. But this mix of narration, mime, song and improvised illusion, along with dramatic scenes, has now entered the bloodstream of contemporary theatre.

One aspect Cheeseman does claim as the Vic's own is the "puritanism" with which he rejected textual invention in favour of the "authenticity" of primary sources, especially recorded speech. "Listen, listen," Charles Chilton told him, "to the richness of people's speech". Many of the Vic's most moving effects have relied on the interpolation of the recorded voice of the real person we are watching portrayed on stage, so providing arresting evidence of the strange doubleness of theatrical illusion: its existence in its own right and its respect for the outside world.

Sadly, though, Cheeseman is leaving his post more troubled than fulfilled. The chronic underfunding of the arts may, he believes, mean the irrecoverable loss of as many as 10 regional theatres this year, "the most important cultural institutions in the country". Unable to compete on price, hopelessly outgunned in marketing, the theatre is losing the battle for young audiences to the monoculture of the multiplexes. Having seen at the beginning of his career the development of a student audience eager for the kind of repertoire he describes, fostered by teachers with the requisite resources and motivation, he now sees that same audience dwindling to the point where it is virtually impossible to risk new work. The understanding that theatre is part of "education, education, education", as well as the base of a whole industry whose continuity runs unbroken from Saturday-morning children's workshops to Oscar nominations, is being lost.

But Cheeseman continues to fight for the theatre at every level. The day I met him, in his role as chair of the National Council for Drama Training, he had just entertained officials from Baroness Blackstone's department in an effort to convince the Government of the need for statutory grant support to ensure that talent, not ability to pay, decides who goes to drama school. Asked what it takes to do his job, he first cites a nearby address – his is "230 paces away" and you can imagine him slipping across at midnight to check the bar's stock of lemon slices; more seriously, he says it takes "love and thoroughness" – qualities for which I, like countless other regular and occasional theatregoers from the Potteries, have had reason to be grateful over the past 36 years.

'The Tempest' opens at the New Vic, North Staffs, 4 March: 01782 717962



'Love and thoroughness': that's Peter Cheeseman's recipe for theatrical success. Inset left: Cheeseman with a miner and cast member after recording underground for 'Miner, Dig the Coal'. Above right: Cheeseman directing the 1965 'Staffordshire Rebels' (above left), featuring Ben Kingsley (second from left) Main photograph: Denis Thorpe

Time, gentlemen, please...

Paul Taylor raises a glass to the rare humanity of Conor McPherson's bar-room vision, 'The Weir'

Arriving home from the Royal Court's main-stage transfer of Conor McPherson's superb *The Weir*, I switched on the television to discover David Mamet laying down the law about drama on *Face to Face*. People only talk, he declared, because they want something from someone. Well, this may be the case with the power battles in his own brilliant, attenuated world. But McPherson's play – mediating, with a generous supple warmth, between humour and tragedy, the comically small-minded and the painfully large-spirited – is a rich demonstration that Mamet's dictum is a partial truth only.

There would be a way of summarising *The Weir* that made it sound like the kind of male competition Mamet understands so well. The virtually men-only domain of a bleak Sligo pub – where the fact that the ladies' loo *is bust* is of little inconvenience to a clientele of ageing bachelors – is awoken from its sad, amiable torpor one dark windy night by the arrival of an attractive young Dublin woman, Valerie (excellent Julia Ford). She has just bought a house nearby from Finbar (Des McAleer), a middle-aged flash hotelier and son of the district, who wants to show her the local colour and (though there's no relationship and he's married) to show her off.

Ghost yarns and slow jars: home-truths rise to the surface in a Sligo country pub

Photograph: Geraint Lewis

A bald résumé would indicate that Finbar and the regulars strive to impress Valerie with mountingly disturbing (and self-revealing) ghost yarns and that she, in a sense, turns the tables on them with a story of deeply distressing personal loss, made all the more unbearable by (imagined?) spirit contact.

But what makes *The Weir* a triumph for its 26-year-old author – and for Ian Rickson, who directs with such atmospheric intimacy and humane tact – are the things that stop one from making systematic judgements.

It's true that there is a needling tension between McAleer's swanking hotelier (the insecurity of whose ego is hinted at in his ghost story) and Jim Norton's consummately acted Jack, a silver-haired bachelor garage-owner and droll card who resents being condescended to as a curiosity for tourists. But a generous, disguised-as-an-insult joke on his part is able to defuse the situation so no one loses face. McPherson is not out to score points or to diminish anybody. With their stunted horizons, the men are indeed sad, but when Brendon Coyle's taciturn barman pours unfamiliar white wine for Valerie into a half-pint glass and holds it to the light as if waiting for it to form a head, it's the courtly consideration of the gesture as well as its naivety that hits you.

And Mamet's limited theory is beautifully belied by the final phrase in which Jack tells Valerie how, as a young man, he threw away his one chance of love. Oh, sure, since he's lonely and now a bit drunk, it does give him the chance to clutch her hand, but it's not just of himself he is thinking when, at some cost, he heaves this story out and Valerie, estranged from her husband in a remote new territory, knows that too.

To 28 March, Royal Court, St Martin's Lane, London WC2 (0171-565 5000)

THE INDEPENDENT

New wonder bit Powers through almost any material

TECTRON™ DRILL BITS

only £12.99 inc. p&p

Tipped with space age **cobalt wolfram** these drill bits will make short work of **concrete, granite, all steels, brick, ceramics, and plastics.** The secret is in the extreme heat tolerance and diamond like hardness. Extensively used in industry you should never need to replace these remarkable drill bits. We have made available the 5 most essential used sizes these being, **4, 5, 6, 8 and 10mm.** This amazing set comes complete in its own tough case and will give you years of excellent service.

Lasts for Years

£12.99 inc P&P

HOW TO ORDER
☎01702 332922
using your Credit Card or send completed coupon with crossed cheque or postal orders to:
THE INDEPENDENT TECTRON™ DRILL BITS OFFER
325 London Road
Westcliff on Sea
Essex SS0 7BX.
Offer available UK mainland only. Please allow 28 days for delivery from receipt of order. You may return your order within 7 days if not completely satisfied. This does not affect your statutory rights.

Please send to me ..... Tectron™ Drill Bit Set/s @ £12.99 each £ .
The total value being:
I enclose a crossed cheque (with my Address on the back) made payable to: NEWSPAPER PUBLISHING IND202
Or please debit my ACCESS VISA Card account with the sum of: £
My card number is ☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐ Expiry Date __/__
Please use block capitals.
My Name is (Mr/Mrs/Ms) _____
Address _____
Postcode _____ Signature _____
Send To: THE INDEPENDENT TECTRON™ DRILL BITS OFFER
325 London Road Westcliff on Sea Essex SS0 7BX
☐ Please tick the box if you do not wish to receive future mailings from NEWSPAPER PUBLISHING PLC or from companies approved by NEWSPAPER PUBLISHING PLC
IND202
Newspaper Publishing PLC Registered in England No. 1908867

How do you help girls fed on a diet of this?

For years every other magazine has been portraying "superwaif" models like this as the ideal.

And impressionable young girls often feel pressure to conform. Which frequently leads them to skip important meals like breakfast. And we all know that is hardly the best way to start the day. What you may not know (and most girls certainly don't) is that it has been shown that people who have a good cereal breakfast like Kellogg's tend to maintain a healthier body weight than people who skip breakfast altogether.

This is helped by the body being satisfied early in the day. So there's less likelihood of snacking later on. Also, the body burns off the energy it gets from carbohydrate-rich foods like Kellogg's cereals much more readily than the energy it gets from fatty foods.

Of course, we can't claim to solve complex problems, but we think these arguments could help persuade girls to take better care of themselves. And even if they think they're just doing something to stay nice and slim, you know they're getting a good nutritious foundation for the day ahead. With the additional benefit of at least 1/4 of 6 essential B vitamins and 1/6 of the iron recommended daily.

For more information call Kellogg's on 0800 626 066.

Kellogg's®

Serving The Nation's Health

© 1995 Kellogg Company

هكذا من الاصل

هكذا من الاصل

Photographs: Ben Elwes and Sheridan Morley

London comes of age

Lurid leather, time travel and the trouser boot – it's adult, feisty, and very, very Brit. **Tamsin Blanchard** calls it Adult Frock

YOU'VE heard of Adult Oriented Rock. Well now, fresh from London Fashion Week comes AOF: Adult Oriented Frock. The British Fashion brat pack are coming of age – and so are their clothes.

London is all about celebrating individuality and difference rather than chasing the same hem length or trouser shape. The designers are doing their own thing; five years after Marks & Spencer sponsored the first New Generation designers in March 93 – including Ahe Hamilton, Alexander McQueen, Copperwheat Blundell, Paul Frith and Sonnentag Mulligan – many of those names have now become established in their own rights and have had time to solidify their businesses and feel confident enough to know who they are, what their signatures are, and where they are going.

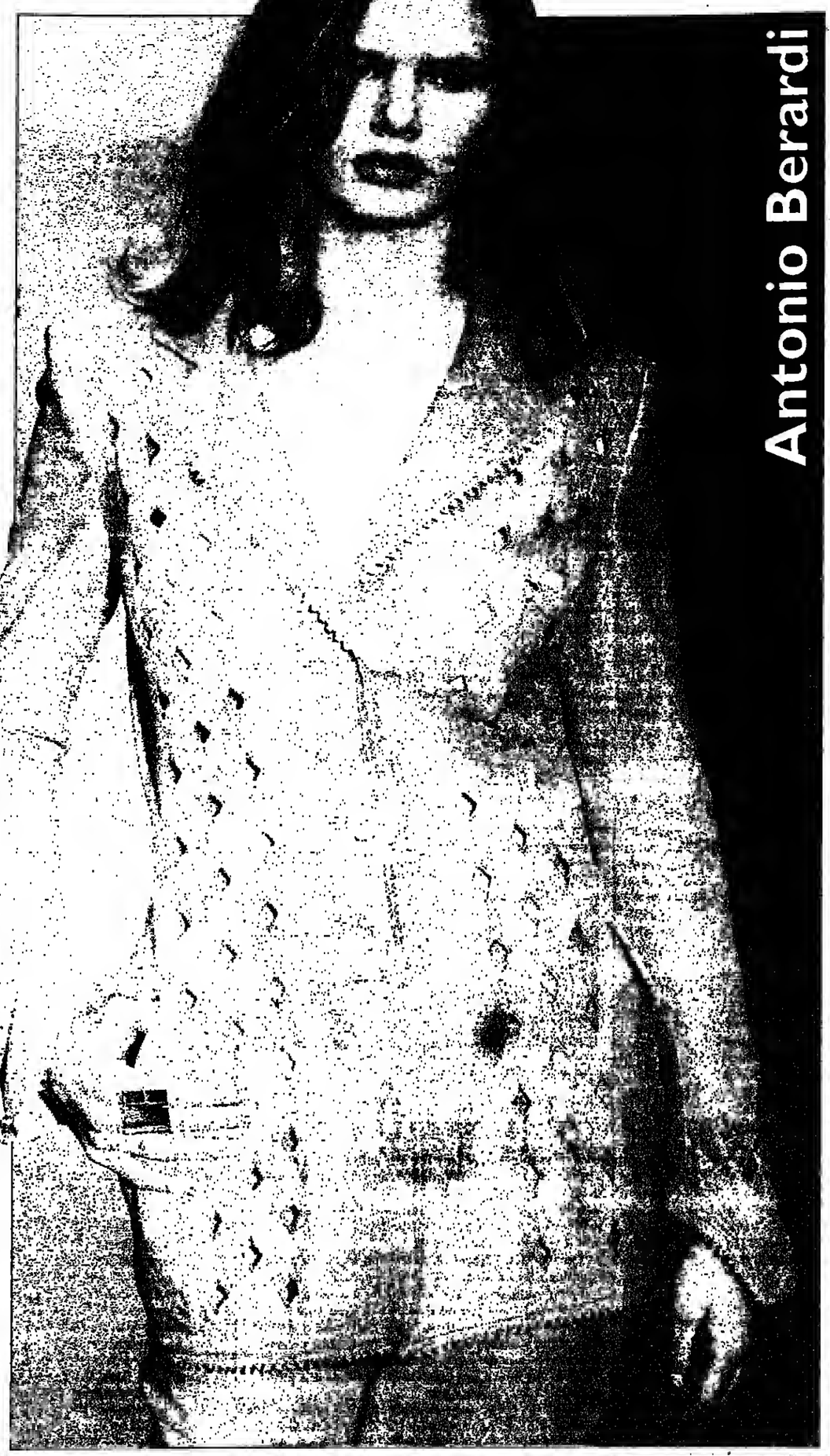
Alexander McQueen shows his collection tonight. The story of his career so far needs little explanation. But there are many other success stories too. Copperwheat Blundell showed its strongest collection to date this week. It received the finest accolade a collection can have, and was declared "absolutely spot on for next season". There was lots of sheepskin – the fabric for winter 98 as seen at Berardi, Gaster and Betty Jackson (below) – and there was a new invention, the trouser boot, a knee length leather boot with its very own trouser leg to cover it. Paul Frith's business has been growing steadily too, with a little help from Bhs which sponsors his shows and has had a hit on its hands with the capsule collection he designs for it. Tracy Mulligan, formerly of Sonnentag Mulligan, presented her first solo collection and it was a winner with both press and buyers, cool elegant and chic, words not often associated with British fashion.

Antonio Berardi, Clements Ribeiro, Pearce Fionda, Sonja Nuttall and Julien Macdonald have all also graduated from the M&S sponsorship scheme. And they all came into their own this week, focusing on what they do best. From Antonio Berardi we had killer leather. From the New York *West Side Story*-style set with pedestrian crossing lights flashing "Walk. Don't Walk". And walk they did, from Michelle Hicks' first march into the audience wearing a leather biker outfit in orange, bubble gum pink and white leather, ingeniously intercut as only Berardi knows how. The collection for winter was a new step forward for the 28-year-old. It is feisty, sexy and high-voltage as always. But it is also resolutely modern. Best of all was a pair of stonewashed denim jeans inset down the side seams with a strip of pink Swarovski crystals. Casual, sexy, effortless – and all a girl needs to make her mark. Likewise, Suzanne Clements and Inacio Ribeiro built on their signature: an eccentric mix of sophisticated design and naïve surface detail. The theme of the collection is Orlando – a bit of time-travelling took us back to the 16th century: Elizabethan jackets with sleeve seams slit to reveal puff of white cotton shirt underneath. There was severe tailoring, and opulent one-shouldered drapes of tartan, embroidered and appliqued coats, and the cashmere knitwear without which it simply would not be Clements Ribeiro. This time, they came in sumptuous solid colour blocks of orange, scarlet and pink. Muscling in for space amid the cashmere, tartan, tailored sheepskin (again) and lace was a good smattering of folk embroidery and gypsy trim. It is just this style of eclectic design and bravura that overseas buyers have come to expect from London.

Clements Ribeiro's freedom to be creative has been assured by its deal with Dorothy Perkins for whom it designs a high street capsule each season. So too, Pearce Fionda has found a more mainstream market with help from Debenhams, leaving it free to do what it wants to with its own collection. It focused on byzantine eveningwear with exotic mixes of fabrics and textures – rich brocade, shiny satin, silk jacquards – adult and exotic.

Sonja Nuttall has also come of age. She has just signed a backing deal with a British manufacturing company, allowing her to concentrate on design. Her signatures shouting loud and clear are her masculine tailoring, and her luxurious understatement. She also threw in a few lines of crystal sequins, some sparkly knitwear and glittery bobble hats, and some tropical hibiscus prints to lighten up the mix.

British fashion is a case of quality, not quantity. You do not have to present a 60-piece collection to get noticed. Last season, it took Matthew Williamson just 11 outfits and this time there weren't many more. A firework beaded cocktail dress, a snowflake embroidered coat, and a baby blue cashmere jumper worn with a fuchsia pink beaded skirt is all you need to get the world's most influential stores interested. Williamson's philosophy has been to keep it small and select, the antithesis of the big corporate designers who are interested in quantity first and foremost – just like the rest of the British fashion industry, really: small but perfectly formed.


Antonio Berardi

Clements Ribeiro

Copperwheat Blundell

Owen Gaster

Matthew Williamson

Bella Freud

John Rocha

Pearce Fionda

Sonja Nuttall

OUT OF THE CLOSET **Bella Freud**

This week Holly Davies delves into Bella Freud's cupboard to divulge the fashion designer's dressing secret

"IT WOULD have to be shoes – I couldn't live without any of them. My favourite pair at the moment are my Stephan Kelian wooden platform clogs which I bought about three years ago. I love them because they're really comfortable and make me look much taller. They seem to give everything I wear with them a certain kick. They are a sort of mousey brown and can change the mood of any outfit. You can wear casual baggy checked trousers with them and they somehow manage to chic it up and make the most masculine of outfits look feminine. This winter I could hardly bear to take them off, but because it was so cold I had to wear socks. I had to walk everywhere really slowly because my feet kept slipping."

The Independent
fashion
Spring 98 special

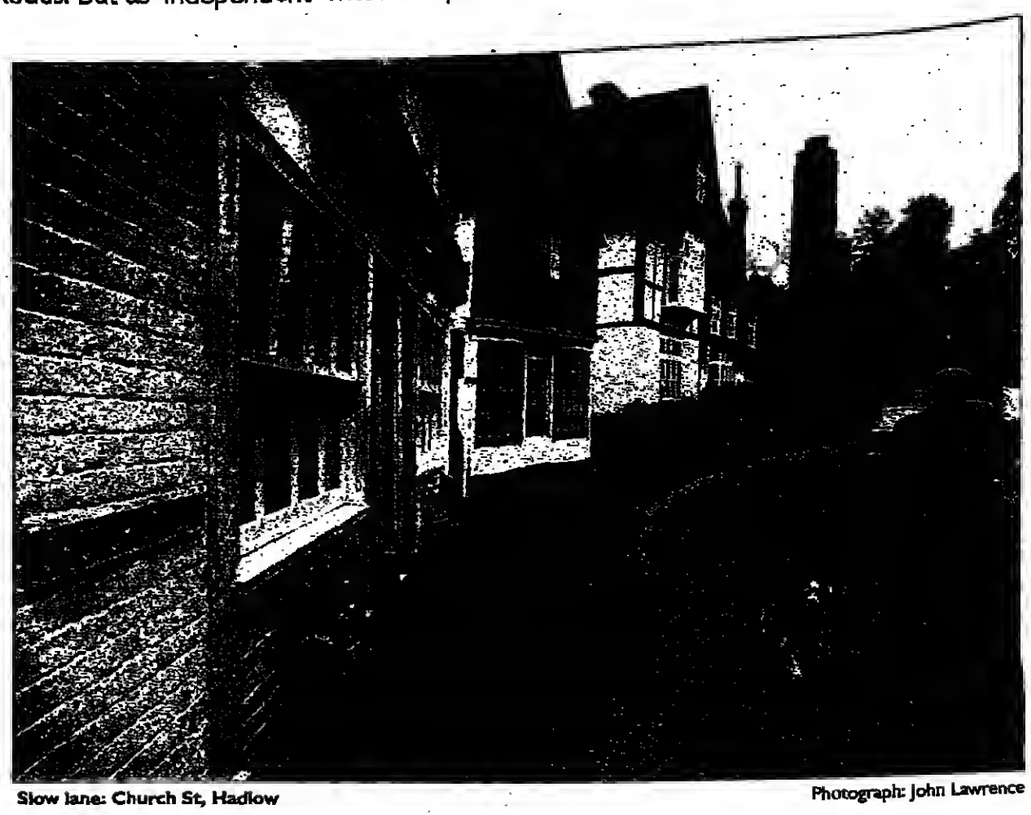
Art and fashion are having a fling. Our 48-page fashion special gets you up to date with the latest from both worlds. Sarah Moon photographs this spring's newest looks in the spirit of the season's muse, Frida Kahlo. Go behind the scenes with Vivienne Westwood as she explains the inspiration behind her new advertising campaign. And see exclusive pictures by Richard Billingham, star of the Royal Academy's Sensation show.

Free with The Independent
Saturday 28 February

Where's the good life?

1,500 people a week flee cities for the country, and the Government is worried by the exodus. But as 'Independent' writers explain, home is a state of mind – not just a place

Fast lane: Church St, Stoke Newington — Photograph: Nicola Kurtz



Slow lane: Church St, Hadlow — Photograph: John Lawrence

The city: 'It wasn't love at first sight, but now I couldn't leave'

JACK O'SULLIVAN

NO ONE pointed out the bus stop when I rented my flat. I first noticed it as I emerged naked from the bathroom and spotted passengers on the top deck peering in. A shock for all concerned, but I soon felt more sorry for weary commuters, passing me as I enjoyed my first drink of the evening. I was more worried about the consequences of living next door to an Indian restaurant. I couldn't have predicted that the most soothing and soporific sound last thing at night is of other people washing up dishes.

It took me a while to appreciate living in the heart of London. It was hardly love at first sight. At first, I ached to see greenery breaking through the overwhelming greyness. After a childhood filled with summers beside the sea, I almost didn't dare imagine going months without seeing the shoreline – when I first arrived aged 22, I actually walked to The Strand, one of London's busiest streets, in the hope of finding some vestige of ocean. I was demoralised to spot not even a seagull.

London seemed a vast, alienating place in which I had lost my bearings. A place of work, not of leisure or pleasure.

Yet, today, I love it. I'm at home and wonder how I could ever leave. What changed about London for me was the discovery that I really live in a village. Except my village isn't struggling to keep its post office, having long ago lost its butcher and baker. I need walk no more than 10 minutes from my front door in Stoke Newington to find almost everything necessary for life. You can fall out of bed and into any number of cafés for breakfasts that go on all day. There's a deli for lunch, more than a dozen restaurants in one street for dinner.

Those with time on their hands can find endless second-hand book shops for browsing, a jazz club for carousing, a flamenco club for dancing. There are shops that will fix your television, cut your hair, mend your clothes, repair your washing machine, massage your body. There is a video store for the mainstream, another for the esoteric. A boutique for thin sophisticates, a singing pub for boozers, smooth bars for trendies.

There is the best of community – you never walk down Stoke Newington Church Street without bumping into friends. But windows don't squint at every coming and going like they do in the country. You can wallow in the anonymity and liberalism of the city. Lesbians raise their children here, living out the legacy of great non-conformists, such as Daniel Defoe, who lived here and are buried in the huge, spooky graveyard full of mausoleums and gay men picking each other up.

There is a sense of history about city life, its ancient buildings and roads, without the preciousness of thatched Tudor cottages. Daniel Defoe's only memorial is the slightly dilapidated Defoe Cabs, whose Ethiopian drivers probably miss the significance of the name. The constant influx of such newcomers provides a diversity and vibrancy which makes the all-white villages of Britain dreary in their monotony, almost scary in their uniformity.

You probably think it's a terrible place to raise children – imagine the drug problems, the discarded syringes. Well, yes, they do find a few in the playground in the mornings. And, yes, you do have to avoid dog dirt on the pavement. But this place is overrun with young children, so we have a wonderful state-of-the-art playground, with lots of swings, roundabouts and climbing frames, built over an all-weather, safe surface. Ask children whether they would prefer to play in a muddy field: you will find a city lover.

Of course, I still miss the sea. There's not much I can do about that. We've covered the garden with pebbles. But there are still no seagulls.

MEANWHILE, IN CARDBOARD CITY ...

DOWN in Cardboard City the last defiant few remain. There are none of the elaborate temporary structures that once defined the Bullring near Waterloo, only a *handful of people huddled round a fire*. More than 200 people once made the concrete underpass their home; now it is down to less than 30.

On Monday, Lambeth Council won an eviction order, enabling it to clear the remaining people living in the Bullring roundabout, to make way for a cinema.

Yesterday those left were defending their home *amongst the concrete pillars in* the dark underpass. Sitting round a brazier they were suspicious and aggressive seeing intruders as a threat to their way of life. "This is our home. You just want to treat us like animals in a zoo," shouted one.

While the life of those sleeping rough is unacceptable to most of us, those who live in Cardboard City feel there is a real sense of community. "People know each other, they have been living together for a long time and it's probably the first time that many of them have had *what they feel is a family*," says Raekha Prasad of the *Big Issue*, who befriended some of the residents. "They have named it home."

"People are there from all walks of life, for a whole range of reasons," says Moyra Peralta, a photographer who has been documenting street life since the 1970s and has spent four months in the Bullring. She says that Cardboard City is *unique to Britain*. "The remaining few who are down there are not happy about being rehoused. They are afraid they are going to lose their bond and their networks. They are feeling terribly upset. They think their whole way of life is going".

Those working to rehouse the homeless say they are *trying to do so as sensitively as possible*. But those about to be removed remain suspicious. Ms Prasad says: "One guy I spoke to had been there for 15 years said to me *'I know it stinks, I know it's shitty, it may* seem like hell to you but we've chosen it'."

— Glenda Cooper

The country: 'It isn't as lovely as you think – that's why I like it'

ANN TRENEMAN

WHEN I tell people in London that I live in a village in the middle of rolling countryside, they get misty-eyed. "Oh how *lovely*," they exclaim. At this point, *I can feel myself getting tense*. I know they are thinking fresh air, long walks, log fires and roses round the door. Perhaps this comes from reading too much Miss Marple or Enid Blyton. Anyway, it bugs me because life in the country isn't like that at all. Usually I can't help but mention this. "Actually it's not all that lovely, and that's why I like it," I say, with my sweetest smile.

This usually stops the conversation dead, which is fine with me. After 12 years in the Kent village of Hadlow, the country isn't so much a destination as a home and that makes it a much more complicated place. Take the old and picturesque farmhouse that we lived in for years. It was surrounded by apple orchards and horse pastures and, I suppose, it could be called lovely. The blossom was gorgeous, certainly, and the pesticides were not too bad either. You don't get one without the other, the farmer said, and really doesn't everyone have to watch the way the wind blows? As for the pasture, the land had once been a dump and there had been a little problem with methane.

None of this seemed to affect the rodents, of which there were many. You get close to nature when you live in a house without a foundation, and I had got used to the odd plant pushing its way up into the house. But weeding your front room is one thing, discovering you are living in a set for *Wind in the Willows* another. One day, as I was tapping away at my computer, I looked down and saw Mole looking up. He was small but terrifying. Ratty was not so scary but only because he was usually dead and deposited by the cat at the back door. The mice were everywhere. One Christmas I sat and watched them race to see which could eat the chocolate tree ornaments first.

Wild animals, dead and alive, are part of life. It's cute having hedgehogs galore, but not so fab when one keels over dead in the garage. In the same way, I loved having a Rayburn, but there is nothing romantic about keeping it stoked up with coal. The view from the kitchen window was stress-free (pasture, rolling hills etc) but if I'd looked the other way I'd have seen a road filled with articulated lorries.

None of this is meant to be negative. It's just the way it is. The real reason I like living in the country has little do with such things. I like it because it is absolutely silent at night and you can see the stars (and not the street lamps) when you look up. It feels safer, and the countryside is just a short walk through the council estate.

People are always saying that living in the country is good for children, but what they really mean is that it is good for parents. I may spend lots of time commuting each day but I spend very little worrying about the kids. They walk to school and play round the neighbourhood until nightfall. The village school seems fine (though I'm told by others that the one in the next village is much better).

People live where they feel comfortable with the pace, and real time, for me, is in the country. City-dwellers always seem to be going somewhere as quickly as possible. They are used to shops and cafés and pubs being open all the time. They are used to crowds and queues. Everything is possible, nothing denied. Until, that is, they come and visit me. "I know, let's go have a coffee," they suggest on a Sunday afternoon. I say there is only one decent café within a 10 mile radius and it is shut all day long. "How about a country pub then?" they suggest. I say that the pubs round here open at 7pm on a Sunday. My friends look aghast. Perhaps, they say, it's time they were getting back.

Your last chance to write the story of the year for six to nine year olds

THE INDEPENDENT Story of the Year 6
SCHOLASTIC

The Independent/ Scholastic Story of the Year Competition, now in its sixth successful year, aims to encourage top writing for the very difficult to please six to nine year old age group. To help you meet the challenge, some of our most successful novelists and scriptwriters have explained how they set about writing compelling narrative. In this, the final week of the competition, **Anne Fine,** whose award-winning children's novels include *Madam Doubtfire* and *GoggleEyes* talks to **Nicole Veash** about the pitfalls of writing for young readers.

Win £2,000 and have your story published

CHILDREN of between six and nine are the hardest age group to write for. Many are still struggling with the mechanics of reading. Watch their finger stop halfway across the line. Hear their hesitant "sound-it-outs". So keep it simple. Start at the beginning and move on without any flashbacks or projections. Any subtleties in the time scheme are far more likely to confuse than beguile them.

It's a difficult age to please, too, because of the wide and unpredictable range of knowledge and sophistication. I think it helps to use the journalist's dictum: "Never overestimate the reader's knowledge, and never underestimate his or her intelligence." You can usually weave the information they need into the story without patronising all those who know it already and think everyone else does.

The business of shifting levels of sophistication is a lot more difficult. There's such a fine line between cashing in on a child's acceptance of the unlikely or the magical, and offering them something they think is "silly". It's hard to get it right. But whereas you might get away with a horse in the garage, for example, you're likely to stretch credibility too far if you try to suggest that Mum filled up the drier without even noticing it.

If it's real, keep it real. Granny is more likely to be found queuing for her turn on the flames than in her armchair knitting. These days, huge numbers of grannies still work, and the rest have busy lives. So don't send this fictional child of yours off to Gran for the summer, especially not unaccompanied on a train (since she'd end up in care, not at Margate). Cooks wiping their floury hands on aprons, little girls on freshly scrubbed doorsteps blowing bubbles through clay pipes – all this stuff is back from when television sets still had to warm up, and means nothing to today's child. Remember that attitudes have changed as well. Someone sent me a book that began, "A mouse ran across the schoolroom floor. All the little girls screamed and jumped on their chairs, and all the boys roared and chased it." She couldn't think why the children's publishers (98 per cent women) weren't keen, and she probably didn't realise our readers take against this sort of thing even more quickly than we do.

So what do children like? Well, they love to identify with someone or something in the story. It doesn't matter what. It could be another child, or a puppy, or even a lost umbrella. But they do have to care. So tell us, all the way through just what your character is thinking or feeling.

Above all, remember that children's books really matter. It's William and Jennings and the Famous Five who make us readers for ever. And I still miss those glorious miserable wet days my daughters and I spent in the double bed, spreading crumbs and reading, reading, reading. First, me to them. Then, them to me. And, when the youngest was skilled enough, quietly in a row, with the occasional. "Mum, what's this word?" Next time the urge to shop strikes, go to the library instead. Then back to bed. You'll end up better off, and happier. Believe me, so will they.

Anne Fine's latest adult novel, 'Telling Liddy', is published by Bantam, £15.99.

Anne Fine: 'Keep it real'

COMPETITION RULES

Story of the Year 6 offers a £2,000 prize for the winner, with £500 each for two runners up. The top 10 stories will be published in an anthology by Scholastic Children's Books. You are invited to submit stories of 1,500-2,500 words which must arrive on or before 28 February 1998 at: PO BOX 21302 • LONDON • WC1A 1PE. You may enter only once and entries must be made by the writer, not on his/her behalf. Entries must be typewritten, double-spaced and on one side of the paper only. We will not accept stories with illustrations. Manuscripts will not be returned, so please keep a copy. All entries must be unpublished, but published writers may enter with new material. Each entry must be submitted with both a cover page and title page. The cover page must feature the story title, and the entrant's name, address and telephone number. The title page must feature only the title of the story. The story should start on a new page, and the author's name must not feature on any of these pages, so that all entries can be judged anonymously. The winning story will be published in The Independent subsequent to the final judging of the competition which concludes on 22 May 1998. The top three stories and up to 10 others will be published in the autumn, in the anthology *Story of the Year 6* by Scholastic Children's Books.

The competition is not open to employees of, or relatives of employees of Scholastic Ltd or Newspaper Publishing plc or anyone connected with the competition. Proof of posting cannot be accepted as proof of delivery. No responsibility can be accepted for entries which are delayed, damaged, misaid or wrongly delivered. The judges' decision is final and no correspondence will be entered into. Entry grants to Scholastic Ltd the exclusive right to publish an entrant's story in all formats throughout the world for the full legal term of copyright. A copy of the form of the contract may be obtained on application to Scholastic Ltd. By submitting an entry an entrant agrees to be bound by the terms of and to sign this agreement if called upon to do so. Any story chosen for publication in the anthology that does not win one of the top three cash prizes will receive a fee of £200. Any entry not submitted in the form specified will be deemed invalid. If your story is not published in the anthology or in the newspaper by the end of December 1998, these rights revert to you. Entry into this competition implies acceptance of these rules.

هكذا من الأصل

هكذا من الأصل

Elisabeth Murray

ELISABETH MURRAY was the eldest granddaughter of Sir James Murray, founding editor of the *Oxford English Dictionary*, her life of whom, *Caught in the Web of Words* (1977), became a best-seller among biographies.

"Betty's" father, Harold (1868-1955), was James's eldest son. As an inspector of schools he published valuable papers on educational theory and brought about recognition that left-handedness is a natural condition. Meanwhile he learnt Persian, Arabic and Turkish, copying manuscripts by hand in research for his 900-page *History of Chess* (1913), followed later by his *History of Board Games other than Chess* (1952). In retirement he became active in parish and district councils, giving his children an example of responsible service.

His eldest son, Donald, was a regular army officer and fell in the hopeless defence of Hong Kong in 1941. Betty was to bear much responsibility for bringing up his two children. Harold's second son, Kenneth, trained in art and thereafter spent most of his life in Nigeria, fostering traditional arts by teaching, fighting the export or smuggling of treasures and, as Surveyor of Antiques, building up a national museum.

Betty, Harold's third child, was truly a chip off the same block. Educated in three schools because of her father's moves as regional inspector, she went to Somerville College, Oxford, graduating in History in 1931 and gaining a BLitt in 1933; her thesis was published as *The Constitutional History of the Cinque Ports* in 1935.

In 1933 she won a studentship at the British School of Archaeology in Jerusalem and took part in excavation in Samaria. Next she spent two years (1935-37) on the staff of a women's hall of residence in Manchester University before returning to Somerville as a research fellow. But her gifts for administration and care of students had been noticed, and in 1938 she was invited to Girton College, Cambridge, where her aunt Hilda (Sir James's fifth child) had been a lecturer in languages and literature and, since 1924, Vice-Mistress, retiring in 1936. At Girton, Betty served for 10 years, mainly in administrative functions, but she also found time for research, publishing another work on Cinque Ports history, the Kent Record Society *Register of Daniel Rough*, in 1945.

Murray: childlikeness

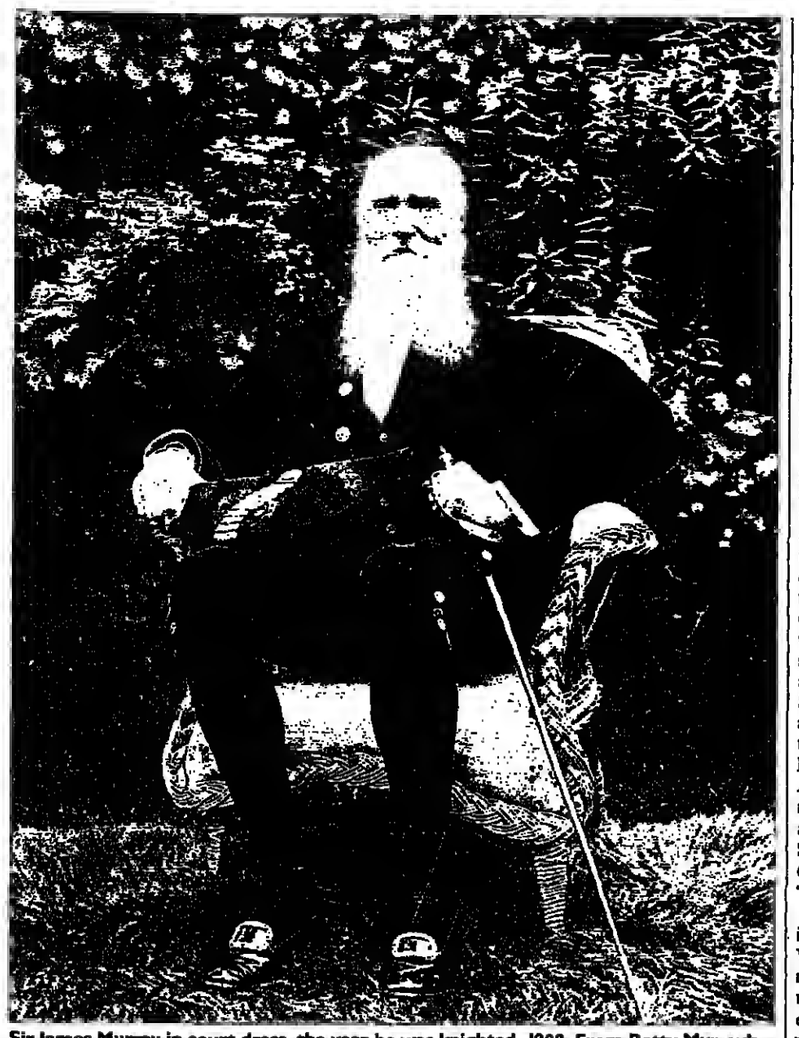
In 1948 came an offer which seemed made for her: to be Principal of Bishop Otter College, Chichester. Her father had retired in West Sussex, and here Betty Murray (who never married) made her home and began to deepen her love for that county. Her home was in the village where that great fighter against the Corn Laws, Richard Cobden, was born and worshipped in the parish church.

Chichester was the other pole of her life. Bishop Otter was a small Anglican teacher-training college with 200 women students, as enclosed as an old-fashioned boarding school. During the years of Betty Murray's principalship, 1948-70, it expanded and developed in every possible way, both in buildings and in co-educational range, till it had 700 students and a major place in tertiary education in the region. She inspired an ever-growing staff with the need to show and encourage imagination, fostering this by (among other means) an amazingly successful policy of acquiring works by 20th-century British artists of the first rank.

Similarly, as a local councillor, she brought about the restoration of Pallant House in the town and its opening as an art gallery, while her achievements for archaeology were manifold, both in Chichester itself and by her presidency of the Sussex Archaeological Society; she helped to organise excavations at Bignor and, most importantly of all, Fishbourne Palace. She also served on the Sussex Historic Churches Trust and was active in the Society of Sussex Downsmen.

Conservation of all things of beauty, natural or works of human hands, was supremely important to her; likewise maintaining ancient common-law rights of way for ramblers which are so much threatened today. Politically an Independent, she was a great fighter for these causes on all councils and committees on which she served.

Her old farmhouse nestled right under the Downs and well into old age she could make a companion pant to follow her up. A walk with her was an education in both knowledge and love of nature; she knew every path and every tree, flower and animal. She founded the Downland Murray Trust to maintain a conservation area which is a fitting memorial to her.



Sir James Murray in court dress, the year he was knighted, 1908. From Betty Murray's best-selling life of her lexicographer grandfather, *Caught in the Web of Words*, 1977

For many, however, Betty Murray's best-known monument will be *Caught in the Web of Words*, on which she began work after her retirement. A worthy biography of Sir James Murray was long overdue. Harold had offered a full-scale life to the Oxford University Press, but it was rejected on grounds of possible embarrassment for persons still living; a revision was turned down as being too boring.

Betty had all the old material and more, but the challenge remained: after the romance of the shepherd boy from the Borders, largely self-educated beyond his elementary schooling, how could all those years in the lexicographer's scriptorium ever make pages to grip a reader? That Betty Murray succeeded, and how brilliantly, is a matter of publishing history.

Yet she too suffered initial frustration from Oxford, and it was on the experienced advice of Robert Gittings (in the next village) that she turned to Yale University Press. This brought her not only speedy acceptance but also a lasting friendship (which soon came to include other Murray cousins) with Chester Kerr, president of the press, and his wife. As for Oxford, it was a sweet day for Betty Murray when they came creeping to acquire the paperback rights.

However, malice was not in her nature. Despite a wide circle of friends, her easy openness to all sorts and conditions of people and her devotion to her parish church, of which she was a warden, what lay in her heart of hearts was very private. Of what she was willing to show and share with others, perhaps what brought one in deepest was her childlikeness. It showed in her way with children and with all the birds and animals (especially hedgehogs) which she loved to feed; but, above all, it had a visible sanctum which she would show to those who could appreciate it: her dolls' house.

This for her was no pitiful symbol of lost happiness like Citizen Kane's "Rosebud", but the living home and nourisher of her imagination; its exquisitely furnished rooms were peopled by old friends with histories; she wrote tiny books for the shelves of its library. What constant alchemy transmuted this inner life of her imagination into a personality of such mature achievement is a matter to be pondered with wonder, awe and joy to have known her.

Robert Murray SJ

Katherine Maud Elisabeth Murray, educationist, historian, archaeologist and conservationist: born Cambridge 3 December 1909; Tutor and Librarian, Ashburne Hall, Manchester 1935-37; Mary Somerville Research Fellow, Somerville College, Oxford 1937-38; Assistant Tutor and Registrar, Girton College, Cambridge 1938-44, Fellow 1940-48, Domestic Bursar 1942-44, Director of Studies in Architecture 1943-48, Junior Bursar 1944-48; FSA 1946; Principal, Bishop Otter College of Education, Chichester 1948-70; Chairman of Council, Sussex Archaeological Society 1964-77, President 1977-80; member, Chichester District Council 1973-87, Chairman, Planning Committee 1979-82; died West Lavington, Sussex 6 February 1998.

Martindale Sidwell

MARTINDALE SIDWELL's influence on post-war British choral music can be measured in the fiercely loyal devotion and deep affection felt by the hundreds who sang under his direction over more than 50 years. When in 1996 a service was arranged at St Clement Danes in London to celebrate his 80th birthday, the building burst at the seams with colleagues and choristers eager to express their gratitude for the training received at the hands of one of music's perfectionists.

Sidwell's contribution as organist and music director both at St Clement Danes (1957-92) and Hampstead Parish Church (1946-92) amounted to an astonishing combined total of over 80 years' service. Add to this his work in founding and conducting the London Bach Orchestra (1967-81), the Hampstead Choral Society (1946-81) and the Martindale Sidwell Singers (1956-92), recording and broadcasting commitments, teaching the organ at Trinity College of Music and the Royal Academy of Music (1963-84), not to mention fulfilling duties as a Professor at the Royal School of Church Music (1958-66), and it becomes clear why "Martin" became a legend.

He was born in Warwickshire in 1916 and christened John William Martindale, a combination of his father's Christian names and his mother's maiden name. John William senior was an enthusiastic amateur musician, and at the age of seven the young Martindale won a place as a chorister (and pupil in the choir school) at Wells Cathedral. By the time his voice broke he was already a talented organist, having studied at the cathedral with Conrad Eden. At just 16, in 1932, he was appointed cathedral sub-organist.

As with so many of his generation, the Second World War interrupted plans and ambitions. He served with the Royal Engineers, working on south coast defences but was also involved in many risky expeditions across the Channel. In 1944 he married the pianist and harpischordist Barbara Hill, a noted performer herself, later to become Professor of Piano at the Royal College of Music.

Somehow Sidwell managed to maintain a strong wartime connection to music-making in the Midlands, becoming respectively director of music at Warwick School, organist of Holy Trinity Church, Leamington Spa and conductor of the Leamington Spa Choral Society.

These proved the springboard for his achievements at Hampstead Parish Church after the war, when he came to London for organ studies under the highly regarded C.H. Trevor at the Royal Academy of Music. He was appointed to Hampstead in 1946, at a time when its strong musical tradition had been decimated as a by-product of the hostilities.

In a remarkably short period he established the choir of men and boys as one of the finest in the country, not excluding cathedrals. In the 1950s it made broadcasts and recordings (with conductors of the stature of Otto Klemperer) and appeared at the Royal Festival Hall and the Wigmore Hall, as well as touring in Europe. Some of these trips were made in connection with the Oecumenical Fellowship of Boys' Choirs in Worship, on whose committee Sidwell sat for a time. The fellowship fostered contacts between boys' choirs all over Europe.

St Clement Danes at the Aldwych reopened in 1958 after the repair of its massive wartime damage, and was designated the church of the RAF. Again, Sidwell was called in to restore a wounded musical tradition. Thus began a Sunday routine which saw him direct the music for matins alternately at Hampstead and St Clement Danes, then take in early evensong at St Clement Danes, before the rush to Hampstead for evensong – preceded by choir practice.

At St Clement Danes, Sidwell received approval for the establishment of a nucleus of eight professional singers – expanded as needed – to cope with a round of duties which included all manner of special RAF occasions, from memorial services and statue unveilings to weddings with an aviation connection. Among his singers were the countertenors James Bowman and Paul Esswood. The BBC regularly broadcast mid-week choral evensongs.

Sidwell: iron discipline in the quest for perfection

Sidwell's trademark, which has left an indelible impression on all who sang for him, was an iron discipline in the quest for perfection, however elusive that might be. He knew what he wanted, and woe betide the BBC producer who dared to query a point or two shortly before the green light went on. But Sidwell also had a sense of humour which ran to an inexhaustible supply of limericks, not all of which could be repeated in church.

To fill any time left in midweek, Sidwell founded variously the Hampstead Choral Society (1946), which provided a platform for a host of British oratorio soloists, the smaller-scale Martindale Sidwell Choir (1956) and the London Bach Orchestra (1967), which staged regular concerts under his direction at the Royal Festival Hall and Queen Elizabeth Hall. While he had a love of English and French music, Bach was perhaps closest to his heart. Sidwell's readings of his music were lighter and faster than audiences were used to in the 1950s, but they anticipated the style of early music performance that has since become familiar.

St Clement Danes acquired its own music society in the 1960s under Sidwell's leadership, its concerts being guaranteed sell-outs. A Fellow of the Royal College of Organists, Sidwell continued to give recitals, and was appointed Professor of Organ at his Alma Mater, the Royal Academy, in 1963.

While RAF chaplains at St Clement Danes came and went, it seemed Martindale Sidwell would go on forever. He was still juggling duties at his two churches until 1992. When he retired, at the age of 76, he found pleasure in taking a seat in both sets of pews Sunday by Sunday, followed in the case of St Clement Danes with, as ever, lunch and a drink or two with his friends in the pub across the road.

Andrew Green

John William Martindale Sidwell, organist, choirmaster and conductor: born Little Packington, Warwickshire 23 February 1916; Organist and Choirmaster, Hampstead Parish Church 1945-92; Organist and Director of Music, St Clement Danes 1957-92; married 1944 Barbara Hill (two sons); died London 20 February 1998.

Roger Lazar

ROGER LAZAR was too self-effacing a character ever to project himself into the upper reaches of BBC News, writes **Charles Wheeler** [further to the obituary by Leonard Miall, 17 February]. The contributors to *From Our Own Correspondent* over the 13 years he ran it will remember him as one of the most successful programme editors of his generation – on a par with men like Laurence Gilliam and Andrew Boyle.

None of us ever said no to a request for a piece from Lazar. Partly that was because we liked him so much; no team of foreign correspondents can have worked for a more considerate editor. But it was also because he stretched us, bringing our reporting up to standards some of us had never reached. *FOOC*, as we called it, was our most demanding outlet and it raised our self-respect.

The late René Cutforth, who resigned from BBC News after covering the war in Korea, used to complain that he'd walked into an editorial straitjacket. "The bastards won't allow you to say it's raining unless you quote an official source," he once warned me. And so it was until the middle 1950s, when Hugh Carleton Greene sacked Tahu Hole, the fearsome Editor, News, and found a place in the schedules in which foreign correspondents could breathe, think aloud and dare to interpret the news. Forty-three years later *From Our Own Correspondent* is still running, a small but evidently durable monument to its architect, Roger Lazar.

BIRTHS, MARRIAGES & DEATHS

DEATHS

MUKHERJEE: With deep sorrow, we announce the sudden death in Bahrain of Dr Subha Mukherjee PhD ACA. The funeral will be held on 28 February 1998. For further details, please contact Frank Davey & Co (Funeral Directors), 31 High Street, Hurstpierpoint, West Sussex BN6 9TT. Telephone 01273 832179. May his soul rest in peace.

TAIT: Sir James, born 13 June 1912. Died peacefully at home on 18 February 1998. Funeral to take place at the United Reformed Church, Quadrant Road, Richmond, Surrey, at 1pm, Saturday 28 February 1998, followed by committal at Mortlake Crematorium, Townmead Road, Mortlake, at 2.30pm. Donations to Teddington Memorial Hospital, c/o Holmes & Daughters, 161 High Street, Teddington TW11 8HH, telephone 0181-977 9532.

WOOLLEY: Phillip Hanbury. Englishman and European, "Teacher of English", died 19 February, aged 85. Dearest husband of Marianne, Dad of Jennifer and Michael, friend to many. Richard Holland – 01458 840658.

For BIRTHS, MARRIAGES & DEATHS, telephone 0171-293 2011.

ROYAL ENGAGEMENTS

The Queen re-opens St Aidan's Primary School, London N4, which has been rebuilt following a fire in March 1996. The Duke of Edinburgh, Patron, attends a lunch for the London Federation of Clubs for Young People, at Drapers' Hall, London EC2. The Princess Royal officially re-opens the Metropolitan Police Station in Savile Row, London W1; and, as Patron, National Association of Victim Support Schemes, attends the launch of a new telephone helpline service at 1 Whitehall Place, London SW1. The Duke of Kent, President, the Scout Association, attends the launch of the Scout Business Trust, at Robert Fleming and Company Ltd, London EC2.

Changing of the Guard

The Household Cavalry Mounted Regiment mounts the Queen's Life Guard at Horse Guards, 11am.

Birthdays

Mr Tom Courtenay, actor, 61; Lord Crickhowell, former chairman, National Rivers Authority, 64; Sir Antony Duff, former Deputy Secretary, Cabinet Office, 78; Lord Gill, a Senator of the College of Justice in Scotland, 56; Sir Alexander Gordon, architect, 81; Mr George Harrison, musician, 55; Mr Edward Kellett-Bowman, MEP, 67; Mr Tony Lloyd MP, Minister of State, Foreign Office, 48; Dr Harvey McGregor QC, former Warden, New College, Oxford, 72; Mr Frederic Mullally, writer, 78; Dr Lewis Moonie MP, 51; Maj-Gen Sir Laurence New, former Lieutenant-Governor of the Isle of Man, 66; Sir Roger Parker, a former Lord Justice of Appeal, 75; Lord Puttnam, film producer, 57; Lt-Col John Stephenson, former Secretary, MCC, 67; Professor Sir Stewart Sutherland, Principal and Vice-Chancellor, Edinburgh University, 57; Mr Anthony Verity, former Master, Dulwich College, 59; Dr Graham Warren, principal scientist, Imperial Cancer Research Fund, 50; Marshal of the RAF Sir Keith Williamson, former Chief of the Air Staff, 70.

Anniversaries

Births: *Anthony Burgess, novelist, philologist, composer and critic, 1917.* **Deaths:** Sir Christopher Wren, architect, 1723; Tennessee Williams, playwright, 1983. **On this day:** Queen Elizabeth I was excommunicated by Pope Pius V, 1570. **Today** is Ash Wednesday and the Feast Day of St Caesarius of Nazianzen, St Calixto Caravario, St Ethelbert of Kent, St Gerland, St Louis Versiglia, St Tarasius, St Victorinus of Corinth and his Companions and St Walburga.

Lectures

Exeter University: Lord Dearing, "The Future of Higher Education", 5.30pm.

LAW REPORT: 25 FEBRUARY 1998

Real risk of prejudice must be shown

Regina v Pearson and others; Court of Appeal (Criminal Division) (Lord Justice Roch, Mr Justice Potts and Mr Justice Poole) 20 February 1998

WHILST the discretion of a trial judge to continue a trial in the absence of one of the accused through illness should be exercised sparingly, an accused who challenged the exercise of that discretion had to show that there was a real rather than a speculative risk of prejudice to his defence if the trial continued.

The Court of Appeal dismissed the appeals of Colin Pearson, Barry Anthony Corbett, and Melvyn Lohse against their convictions at Wood Green Crown Court of conspiracy to defraud.

The allegation against the appellants was that they had defrauded Philpot Dairy Products Ltd and the Intervention Board Executive Agency by falsely representing that consignments of butter and milk powder were intended for export to Poland, thereby obtaining a subsidy, whereas the goods were in fact exported to Spain.

After his evidence had been completed, Corbett had been taken ill, and had thereafter been absent from the trial. The appellants appealed against their convictions on the ground that the judge had been wrong to refuse to discharge the jury because of Corbett's absence.

Jeremy Carter-Manning QC (Registrar of Criminal Appeals) for Pearson; Peter Heppel QC (Registrar of Criminal Appeals) for Corbett; Brian Higgs QC for Lohse; Stephen Kramer QC (Crown Prosecution Service) for the Crown.

Lord Justice Roch said that the judge had refused applications to discharge the jury. He did not consider it proper to require Corbett to attend the trial, but concluded that he would suffer no prejudice if his representatives were given adequate time to report to him on the evidence still to be given by his co-accused and to take instructions about cross-examination. The Crown offered to accommodate Corbett near to the court, but he declined the offer and remained in Brighton where he lived.

Counsel for Corbett had submitted that a defendant had a right to be present at his trial. He relied on the decision in *R v Howson* (1982) 74 Cr App R 172 in which had been said that the judge had a discretion to continue a trial in the absence of one of the accused through illness, but that it was "a discretion which we would expect to be sparingly exercised and never if the accused's defence could be prejudiced by his absence".

Consideration of that ground of appeal should begin with a reference to *R v Kellard* [1995] 2 Cr App R 134, which highlighted the public interest that there should not be mistrials in long fraud cases and that such cases should be heard with reasonable expedition. A point made by counsel for the Crown, which accorded with the experience of members of the court, was that the problem posed by defendants being taken ill during fraud trials was one which was being met increasingly by the courts.

The court would accept the statement of principle in *R v Howson*, subject to the qualification that what was being referred to was a real risk rather than a speculative risk of prejudice to the defence of the accused person who had been taken ill, a risk that could not be overcome by taking the appropriate steps. The principle might be better stated as: "This is a discretion which we would expect to be sparingly exercised and never if the accused's defence will be prejudiced by his absence".

It could not be said in the present case that justice had not been seen to be done. The judge had not insisted on Corbett's presence at the trial. If the fact that he had remained at a substantial distance from the court had caused difficulties for those representing him, those were difficulties of his own making.

No prejudice to Corbett's case created by his absence could be detected, and it followed that there had been no prejudice to any other defendant. The judge had exercised his discretion properly.

Kate O'Hanlon, Barrister

THE INDEPENDENT — INDEPENDENT ON SUNDAY

£10 Conran lunch

Enjoy lunch or early evening supper at six of London's top restaurants for £10

How to Book

To participate in the offer simply collect one token (tokens will be printed every day until Saturday February 28th) and then telephone the restaurant of your choice quoting yourself as an Independent diner. On your arrival at the restaurant you should present your token in order to qualify for the offer. Each token is valid for a complete table booking. The tokens will be valid for one week only, and will be dated accordingly. To continue to participate in the offer, simply collect a token from the week in which you wish to dine. Pre-booking is essential and all bookings are subject to availability.

The Independent offer is available at the following restaurants:

Bluebird 350 King's Road, London, SW3 5UU. 0171 559 1000. Lunch 12noon - 3pm, early evening supper 6pm - 7pm

Blue Print Café The Design Museum, 28 Shad Thames, London, SE1 2YE. 0171 378 7031. Lunch 12noon - 3pm, early evening supper 6pm - 7pm*

Le Pont de la Tour Bar & Grill 36d Shad Thames, London, SE1 2YE. 0171 403 8403. Lunch 12noon - 3pm, early evening supper 6pm - 7pm

Mezzo 100 Wardour Street, London, W1V 3LE. 0171 314 4000. Lunch 12noon - 3pm, early evening supper 6pm - 7pm

closed Saturday lunchtime, open Sunday 12pm - 4pm

Quaglino's 16 Bury Street, St James's, London, SW1Y 6AL. 0171 930 6767. Lunch 12noon - 3pm, early evening supper 5.30pm - 6.30pm

Zinc Bar & Grill 21 Heddon Street, London, W1R 7LF. 0171 255 8899. The special 3 course menu is available between 12noon and 7pm between Monday and Wednesday the offer is extended until 11pm*

The offer is available 7 days a week at all six restaurants

* Closed from 6pm on Sunday. Offer not available after 6pm on February 14.

THE INDEPENDENT — INDEPENDENT ON SUNDAY

Valid between Saturday February 21st and Friday February 27th

Name _____

Address _____

This voucher entitles the holder and all members of their booking to participate in The Independent/Conran Restaurants £10 lunch offer

THE INDEPENDENT

EDITOR: ROSIE BOYCOTT: DEPUTY EDITOR: CHRIS BLACKHURST
ADDRESS: 1 CANADA SQUARE, CANARY WHARF, LONDON E14 5DL
TELEPHONE: 0171 293 2000 OR 0171 345 2000
FAX: 0171 293 2435 OR 0171 345 2435
THE INDEPENDENT ON THE INTERNET: WWW.INDEPENDENT.CO.UK

Political follies under the Dome

IT'S ONLY a dome, Prime Minister, only a shell of a building. At best it's only going to accommodate a leisure event. Does that really justify the preachifying and the chiding and the hyperbole Mr Blair served up yesterday? He compared the Dome to St Paul's, and that is fatuous – not because Richard Rogers is not a fine architect who might conceivably deserve comparison with Christopher Wren – but because the cathedral was built in a Christian age to glorify God, and the transcendental purpose of the Dome is ... what? New Labour offers no secular religion. We are – to our credit – these days an incredulous people. Does the Prime Minister intend us to worship at the shrine of technology or try to recover a modernist sensibility in a post-modern age? Politicians tend to make very poor midwives to new world-views. It just won't do for the Prime Minister and his acolytes to talk in these quasi-fundamentalist terms: this was conceived as a temporary structure to house a one-off exhibition. He will be lucky if it works out as well as the Festival of Britain in 1951. The Greenwich Dome will succeed if it provides a good, Disneyesque day out. To put the authority of the British state in play for things as evanescent as those is sheer folly.

The Dome's fate rests on the myriad details of leisure business planning. This is for professionals. Yet what we had yesterday was a Cabinet minister – Mr Mandelson – behaving as if he were the project's chief executive. The problem is not just that he is his own worst spokesperson. His serpentine answers; his belligerence; his brittle *amour propre*: as a political performer he is a liability. But why is he out there on the high wire at all? A legacy from the Tories was the notion of arm's length government. You set up an "agency", give its chief executive full powers and as a politician you (in theory) wind it up and walk away. Politicians are notoriously bad as managers; it is in their own best interests to stand well back. Instead, the Dome project has sucked them in. Its management structure is a mish-mash of political and executive responsibilities. Jenni Page, the chief executive of the company, passes the buck. Lord Rogers (one of the "litmus" testers) says a single creative director is desperately needed. Mr Mandelson (sole shareholder) disagrees. And confusion reigns.

Messrs Blair and Mandelson, admittedly having inherited an administrative mess from the Tories, have compounded the problem by appearing to take personal responsibility. They are too intimate with those private-sector sponsors who have been persuaded to cough up (including, ominously, Rupert Murdoch's Sky – we already know the *quid pro quo*). As a result the necessarily limited political capital of this government has been strewn profligately over the muddy site at Greenwich. Instead of keeping its powder dry for the important things, New Labour's political fate is being inextricably bound up with events over which mere politicians can have no control – matters of imagination, taste, Jubilee Line signalling.

Yet it is us that Mr Blair reproves. Sounding like a cross between a Baptist minister high in his pulpit and Lady Thatcher in her most grating "Rejoice!" mode, he commands us to respect daring and excellence. It is difficult not to react defensively to his stern criticism of carpers and naysayers. There is a national trait which the media carries to extremes, sniffing at greatness. And the Dome is a fantastic construction. *The Independent* sits, literally, on top of the site and daily we see the spider's web of cables being spun between the rocket-like girders. When the skin is added next month it will become a circus tent of giant proportions. Yesterday's package of contents was alternately bizarre, mind-expanding and banal. So much will depend on the finish, the quality of materials but also the training provided to staff – whose recruitment is being left desperately late.

Of course we have to wish the whole thing well. But we wish this government well too in its central purposes. We therefore also wish that Tony Blair had not yesterday identified himself and New Labour quite as intimately, quite as passionately with a project which so easily could fall into the pits of mediocrity and mismanagement and consequently provoke deep public revulsion.

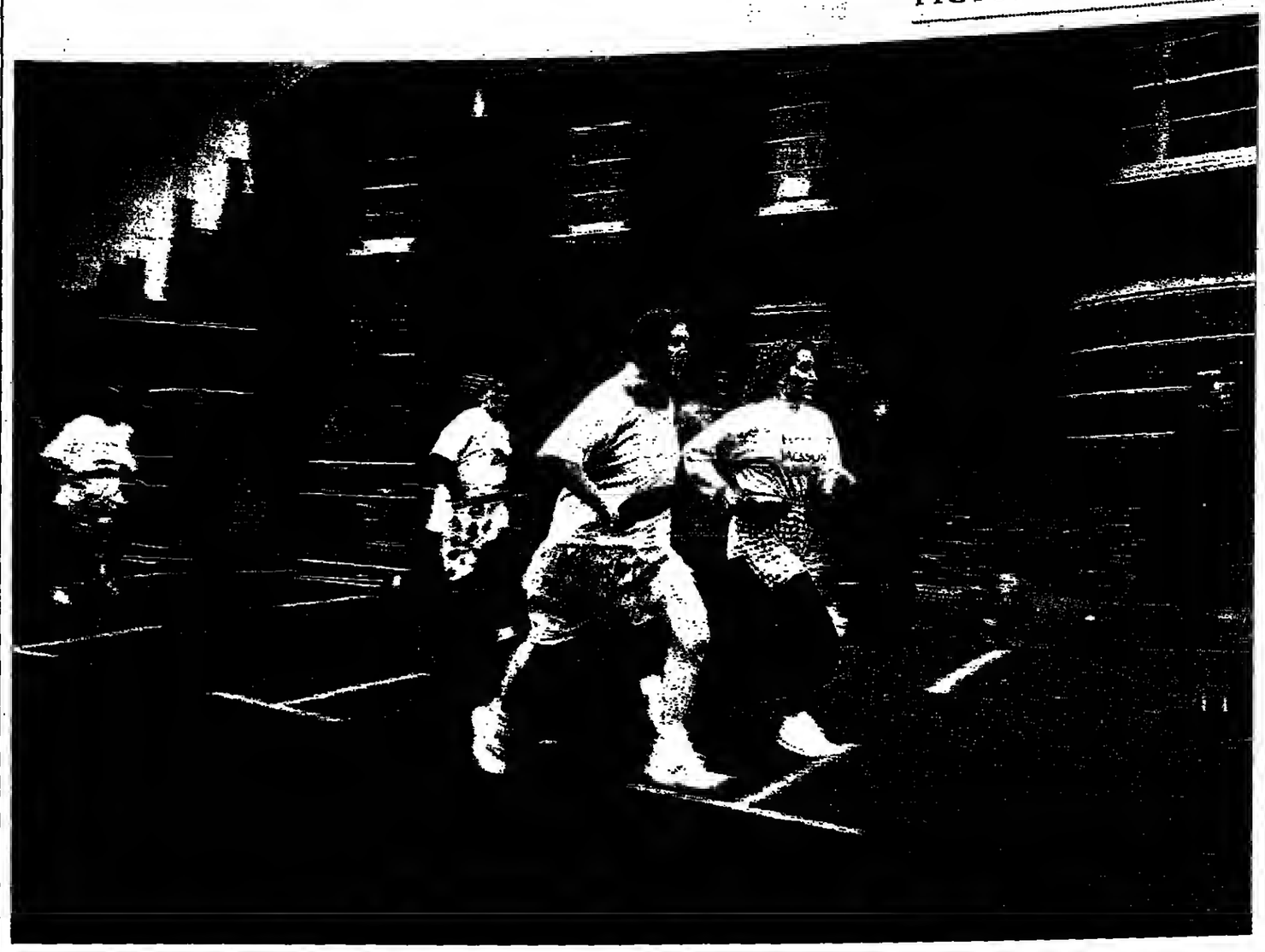
Unfair veto on Sir Sean

FROM HIS unbreakable Scottish soldier in *The Hill* to his definitive James Bond, Sean Connery is a great British film star. He is also a tax exile. Content to leave the green hills of Scotland far behind him for most of the year he has none the less been lending his sex appeal to romantic Scottish Nationalism – the misty-glens-and-braes variety rather than a form of politics meaningful in the lives of the people of Edinburgh to whom he once delivered milk. Connery is also credited with approving the use by men of physical force in controlling their womenfolk. Sometimes she needs a good slap, is how he is supposed to have put it.

Where in all that is Connery's claim on a knighthood and where the veto? If Donald Dewar gave him the black spot because he is a Nat, that shows the Scottish Secretary lacks political imagination. To have a member of a republican party on his knees accepting a knighthood from Elizabeth II (when all good Scots know she is only Elizabeth I) would have been a Unionist propaganda coup.

But if Connery's reported views about hitting women were the sticking point, this is hard. The star is already a freeman of the City of Edinburgh, which city has run several campaigns against domestic violence, and no one has yet suggested he be stripped of that honour. Besides, how many existing knights (or ladies) would pass parallel tests of political correctness? Knighthoods are a bauble which at best mark out people of real distinction. Sean Connery is one and has been unfairly treated.

PICTURE OF THE DAY



Flat out: The annual Shrove Tuesday pancake race in Olney, Buckinghamshire, yesterday. It is said to be the oldest pancake race in the country, dating back 500 years
A 12ins-wide print of this photograph can be ordered by telephoning 0171-293 2534, price £15
Photograph: Tom Pilston

LETTERS

***Post letters to Letters to the Editor** and include a daytime telephone number*
Fax: 0171 293 2056; e-mail: letters@independent.co.uk E-mail correspondents are asked to give a postal address. Letters may be edited for length and clarity.

Working mothers

THE Equal Opportunities Commission is delighted that *The Independent* has chosen to draw attention to the difficulties many parents have in trying to combine work with bringing up a family.

As *The Independent* so rightly points out, paying for childcare is a major item in the household budgets of all working parents and cost of childcare can act as a barrier to women returning to work. We are also delighted that *The Independent* is giving recognition to the contribution that women make to the economy.

The EOC believes that expenditure on childcare is an investment in Britain's future. The value of caring must be acknowledged if parents in general and women in particular are not to sacrifice their current and future incomes as the price of taking responsibility for their families.

Tax subsidies are one way of providing help and we shall be following *The Independent*'s campaign with interest.
KAMLESH BAHL
Chairwoman
Equal Opportunities Commission
Manchester

MANY middle-class women go out to work so that they can help to pay for their children's private education – why should the taxpayer subsidise the cost of the child-minders that they need as a result?
TOM HUDSON
Buckingham

THROUGH the generous tax relief the system allows married couples, particularly where one of them does not work, the state is already subsidising Sally Dealler's childcare arrangements (Letters, 24 February). My salary supports myself and my two young children, and I don't see why, through the tax breaks already in place, it should also be helping to support other people's non-working wives.
Mrs M A MASKELL
Maidenhead,
Berkshire

Brownfield building

JOHN PRESCOTT'S call for an urban renaissance and greater use of brownfield sites is very encouraging ("Prescott says recycle", 24 February). But your suggestion that the Chancellor will veto a package of incentives that Mr Prescott wants to put forward is alarming.

The new policy will bite only if it is backed by better incentives and grants to build well and offset the extra costs of brownfield sites. The funding could come from measures such as Civic Trust's proposals for a greenfield levy, which Mr Prescott is apparently considering.

Yet under present plans that Mr Prescott inherited from the Conservatives, his department's core spending programme for regeneration is actually planned to fall. This is now a nonsense. The Chancellor needs to show in the Budget that the whole Government is backing Mr Prescott's vision with a package of green taxes and other measures. Mr Prescott has responded to the national call for an urban focus; we must now also will the means to deliver to a high standard.
MICHAEL GWILLIAM
Director
Civic Trust
Liverpool

THE ARGUMENT about development land is not about "affordable new homes" (leader, 20 February).

The last government instructed our county council (Devon) to plan for 99,000 new dwellings; 70 per cent of these are required to satisfy inward migration; two new settlements will be needed to achieve this target. An inspector recently supported this stance and at the same time rejected any target for affordable social housing for local people.

To see what happens when developers are let loose on green field sites, I visited one of the new generation of "self-contained new settlements" – Great Notley in Essex. The result was predictable: row upon row of detached "executive homes".

Oh, and by the way, my politics do not "tilt to the right".
STEVE MELIA
South Brent,
Devon

Brave whistleblowers

IT IS encouraging that through the Public Interest Disclosure Bill employees who alert the authorities to dangerous or criminal practice at their work will be afforded some protection ("Thinking of shopping the boss but don't want to lose your job?", 23 February).

However, it is not clear that those dismissed could be reinstated under the legislation. The law would be unlikely to enforce what would be a very strained employer-employee relationship, especially in small or medium-sized companies.

The scale of the problem is considerable. Each year about 300 people are killed at work, and over 25,000 suffer serious injury, and Health and Safety Executive reports have suggested that management failures are responsible for about 70 per cent of accidents. My own national research suggests that about 20 per cent of workplace fatalities are, *prima facie*, cases of corporate manslaughter.

Nevertheless, even under the new progressive law, an employee would have to be particularly courageous and self-sacrificing to report dangerous practices and risk exchanging employment for a compensation cheque.
Dr GARY SLAPPER
Law programme
The Open University
Walton Hall
Milton Keynes
Buckinghamshire

Robbed in Kenya

I WAS horrified to read of the killing of Roy Chivers whilst he was on holiday in Kenya (report, 17 February). My partner and myself have just returned from a holiday in Kenya where we, too, were victims of a very frightening robbery. Three men wielding machetes robbed us of money and valuables. Our tour operator's representative did not give a warning to the other tourists. Are the tour operators frightened to cause unnecessary concern over another "isolated incident"?

Having spent some time in Kenya in 1995, I was shocked at the severe decline that the country has taken in two years. Local people I spoke to gave graphic accounts of the crime epidemic that is slowly eroding their tourist industry. How long will it be before Kenya, like Egypt, is understood to be an unsafe and chancy holiday destination?
M CHANDLER
Port Talbot, West Glamorgan

Irvine's wallpaper

JOHN MITCHELL (letter, 24 February) asks that we stop carping about the money spent refurbishing the Lord Chancellor's apartment.

If the architecture is distinguished and the expenditure is necessary to preserve it then Lord Irvine can do as the rest of us do – live in his own home and commute to work. The official residence might then be open to the public at all times and we could all enjoy the decorations we have paid for.

Many of us doubt that the expenditure is necessary or that, as Lord Irvine claims, he was distanced from the decision to go ahead. He could have said "No" and suggested that the money be used to fund the odd hospital bed rather than paper the parlour.
NORMAN MITCHELL
London SW6

Cannabis as medicine

AS A cancer sufferer who is undergoing chemotherapy, I should like someone to explain to me the logic of the fact that although it is illegal for doctors to prescribe cannabis to relieve my symptoms it is legal to use heroin as a medical drug.

The evidence that cannabis is non-habit-forming and less damaging than heroin, tobacco or alcohol is now overwhelming. Many people suffer pain that only cannabis can relieve, and sufferers from ME can get relief by its use. What is the justification for forcing sick people either to suffer unnecessarily or to become criminals?

I have never used any recreational drug but alcohol.
R E STEBBING
London E12

Housing for volcano isle

THE LAST thing Montserratians need is the nannyism of a UK prefabricated housing estate despoiling their beautiful island, which, despite the present setback, yet has a special future in the regional tourist economy ("Extra aid for Montserrat", 19 February).

Given the tools, a traditional blockwork house can be completed in three weeks at a fraction of the cost, providing essential local employment. If nannyism destroys the skill of West Indian domestic woodcraft, the indigenous character that visitors come to see may be lost. Good urban management, a new blockmaking machine and adequate cement would be more to the point and could have been supplied this time last year.
STEVE OSGOOD
Teddington, Middlesex

Time to celebrate

A MAJOR problem facing the organisers of various "Millennium Experiences" seems to be time – being ready on time, that is.

There is a solution – recognise that the next millennium really starts on 1 January 2001. There now – you have a whole year more than you thought.
MICHAEL TAYLOR
Stenton, Lothian

I think, monsieur, the shy, reserved Englishman is trying to tell you something

MILES KINGTON

FROM TIME to time this column likes to cater for those of its readers for whom English is a second language, and do something to make them aware of the great richness of our native tongue.

The British are internationally renowned for their shyness and reserve, and today I am bringing you fourscore different ways in which the English language can be used to tell someone to go away, ranging from the silkily polite to the blunt. Next time you want to get rid of some importunate Briton, monsieur, one of the following eighty-odd phrases is bound to do the trick!

It's getting late ...
Sorry to break up the party ...
Busy day tomorrow ...
Time to wend your way, I think.
Good heavens, is that the time?
Doesn't time fly when you're having fun?
My wife and I are going to bed now.
All good things come to an end.
Time, gents, please.
Let's be having you!
Have you no homes to go to?
Do us a favour!
Off you go now!
Be off with you!
Make yourselves scarce!
Are you still here?
Out!
On your skates!
Buzz off!
Scram!
Beat it!
Avaunt my sight!
Begone!
Stand not upon the order of your going, but go!
Farewell!
Awa' wi' ye!
Get going!
Go away!
Just GO!
Get lost!
Push off!
Vamoose!
Skedaddle!
Hop it!
Take a powder!
Split!
You're barred!
Get out of it!
Go to hell!
Go to blazes!
Go and take a running leap in the nearest lake.
Go and eat coke.
Go and boil your head.
Vanish!
Get stuffed!
Get knotted!
Piss off!
Bugger off!
Clear off!
Clear the area.
Fire!
Bomb!
Earthquake!
Police!
Vacate the premises.
Do not disturb.
Trespassers will be Prosecuted.
Keep Out.
No Entry.
Private.
No admittance (except on business).
Callers by appointment only.
Closed.
Sorry, No Callers at House.
This correspondence is now closed.
Keep moving.
Mind the gap.
Move along there, please, sir.
Keep clear.
Keep off the grass.
Staff only.
Members only.
Not beyond this point.
So far and no further.
Can't you take a hint ?
It's getting late...
Sorry to break up the party...

If you would like a full list of such phrases, just send for our "Guide to British Hospitality".

هكذا من الاصل

هكذا من الاصل

Why liberals owe a grudging debt to the threat of force

DONALD MACINTYRE

We liberals are never happy. Having fretted about war we are now uneasy about the peace. Having worried about the allies demonising Saddam, we now worry that he is stronger than ever. Having preferred a diplomatic solution all along, we now worry about whether diplomacy has been successful enough. There is a solution to the liberals' dilemma – to be a bit less grudging about the fact that force has shifted Saddam without a shot being fired. That said, it has not been liberalism's finest hour. Consider first, now that the immediate crisis is over, three myths that have built up during the Gulf crisis.

The first myth is that Britain was merely the lapdog of the US. Britain was never, once the crisis began, going to withhold its backing from the US. But it's becoming clearer that London played a significant role in persuading Washington that Kofi Annan's mission was worth trying. At a meeting convened in London, on 14 February, of the Middle East Regional Directors of the State Department, Quai D'Orsay, and the Foreign Office, Britain brokered a deal that made possible the Security Council's decision to sanction a heavily mandated mission by Annan.

The strategy was twofold: on the one hand, it maximised the chances of the diplomatic solution that most British ministers had always preferred. But it also had another, harder-edged benefit: if Kofi Annan were to come back empty-handed then it would have been much more difficult for the French and the Russians, having signed up to the Annan mission, to oppose, much less to veto, air strikes on Iraq. Second, the British were the principal authors, again in the face of some initial reluctance from Washington, of last week's UN resolution significantly increasing the oil-for-aid programme. Diplomatically, this no doubt helped to lure the French and the Russians a little closer to the US/UK position. But the larger virtue was that it was a policy which drew a clear and public distinction between the regime and the people who suffer cruelly under it.

The second myth is that the British government was somehow forsaking its Europeanism by siding with the Americans in threatening Saddam with force. You don't have to accept every dark ministerial hint that France was motivated in its opposition to force against Saddam only by commercial greed to appreciate that Britain was less isolated in Europe than it sometimes looked. Beside France and perhaps Greece, only Luxembourg has directly opposed British backing for the US stance. Luxembourg's egregious foreign minister, Jacques Poos, having excelled himself at the outset of the Balkan war by claiming that this was "the hour of Europe", went on to declare with equal absurdity of the latest Gulf crisis that while it might be desirable to threaten force on occasions, it would be quite another thing to carry the threat out. Belgium, Denmark, Holland, Germany, Portugal, Spain, and probably Italy, would have all offered either military or logistical help, while Austria and Finland were showing signs of political support. And this may stem from a larger understanding of the price that has to be paid, on occasions, by the Nato allies for continuing US engagement in Europe.

The third myth is that the US and Britain should never have been prepared to use force against Saddam, and that diplomatic means alone could have achieved this week's solution. That flies directly in the face of experience. Whatever practical deficiencies the Baghdad agreement may turn out to have in its application to Unscom inspections of the all-important presidential sites, it is a huge advance on the position Saddam was taking before the threat of force started to loom and when he was denying any access to the sites at all. Nor, rather importantly, is it the view of the UN Secretary General. Watching Annan's and Tariq Aziz's press conference on CNN in a Brussels office on Monday, the Foreign Secretary and his senior officials displayed palpable tension as Annan went through the elaborate courtesies of thanking the Iraqi regime for its reception of his delegation. It was only when Annan said in answer to a question that diplomacy worked best when it was backed by "firmness and force" that Cook allowed himself the ghost of a smile. When Kofi Annan, the first man to dignify the UN office in recent years, says so, it's worth taking seriously.

This doesn't mean that there are no reasons for apprehension. Britain's representative at the UN was right to press yesterday for a clear explanation of Clause 4b of the agreement which rather opaquely refers to "specified detailed procedures" that will govern the inspection of the Iraqi presidential sites where chemical and biological weapons may be, if not made or stored, at least documented. It will be necessary, but possibly extremely difficult, for Britain and the US to secure in New York a clear mandate for acting against Saddam if he breaks the new agreement he signed this week. Blair was correct yesterday to warn that a "piece of paper signed by the Iraqi regime plainly cannot be enough". Saddam's hyper-spin throughout the Arab world will persuade many that he has tricked the Great Satan yet again. Above all he is still there.

All these are reasons why Blair was right not to be excessively triumphalist in the Commons yesterday. We liberals should be a little less grudging – not least because the UN suddenly matters again. Some of those who oppose the war do their case a disservice when they also denounce the peace. Those who complain that the objectives of bombing weren't clear shouldn't complain too much if achievements made without bombing have some ragged edges, too. It's a matter for quiet rejoicing that force worked, so far, without having to be used. And *pace* Jacques Poos, that only happens when those wielding the force are ready to use it. Blair and Clinton were; the outcome is something to celebrate.

How to cope with the cheapest energy ever – make it expensive

The price of oil has fallen and is still falling, with fatal consequences for the environment but, says **Hamish McRae,** there is a way out of the trap

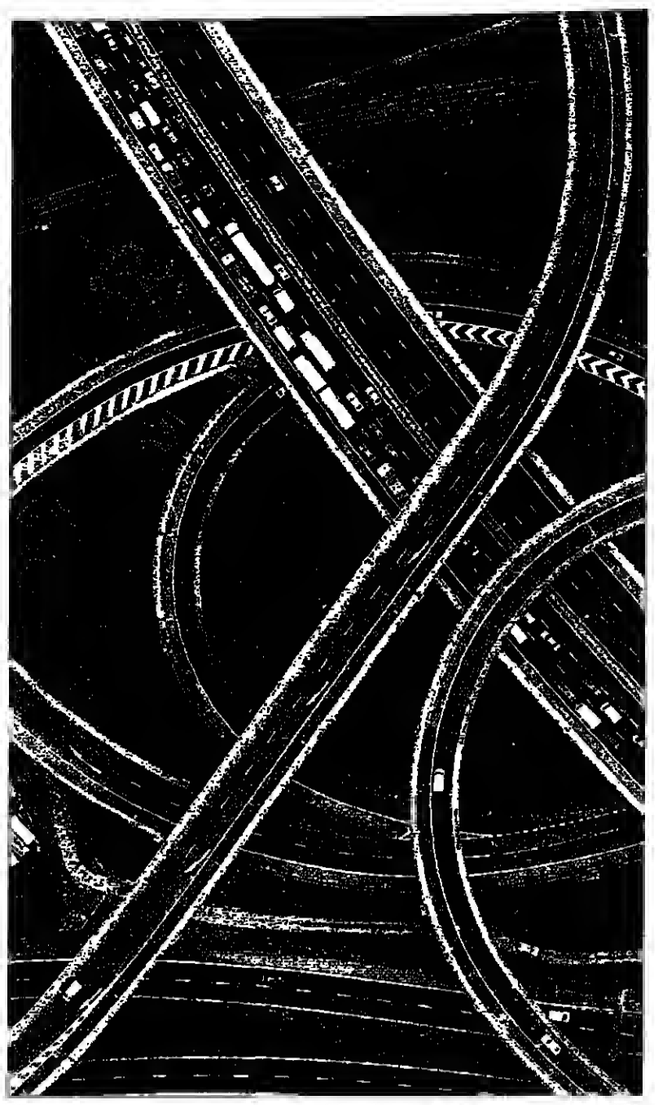
Even silver clouds sometimes have a dark lining. As the markets yesterday signalled, in their own inimitable way, we're in for a period of very low oil prices. They reckon that if the apparent settlement in Iraq leads to the lifting of UN sanctions on that country's exports, even more oil will get pumped on to the already swamped world market – for the oil price is now as low in real terms as it was before it quadrupled in 1973-74. Indeed, it is just about as low in real terms as it has ever been since the world first starting using mineral oil in large quantities more than a century ago.

Expect this situation to continue. The main determinant of energy use in the world is economic growth, and East Asia, which has accounted for two-thirds of all growth since 1990, is currently stalled. Cheap oil means cheap energy. Oil, and gas (which follows the oil price pretty closely) account for roughly two-thirds of the world's energy supplies, and coal makes up most of the rest. Only 10 per cent of the world's energy comes from non-fossil fuels, mostly nuclear and hydro-electric power. In many ways we should welcome a plentiful supply of cheap energy; it is a crucial element in determining living standards everywhere.

But in terms of the effect on the environment, this is very bad news. We cannot rely on the price mechanism to control our energy use. The market, when it is on your side, is a wonderfully powerful ally. Anyone who can remember the two oil shocks will recall how people cut energy use. The immediate effect was for people to drive less and turn down the thermostats, but there was also a longer-term effect, as car manufacturers focused on fuel consumption, and architects on the energy efficiency of buildings. From now on, though, the market will be against savings of this sort.

We can already see how hard it is to fight the market. The well-meaning legislation in the US to increase fuel efficiency has mainly had the effect of producing gutless cars, which in turn has encouraged real Americans to buy light trucks and four-wheel-drive vehicles instead. Of course, these use much more fuel, but fuel is so cheap that no one cares too much.

We should not, however, sneer at US hypocrisy. Our own deputy prime minister has recently publicised the fact that he is exchanging his regular official Jaguar for a new one fuelled by natural gas. But that does not make his Jag significantly kinder to the environment, or any more efficient. Gas is cheaper only because the tax is lower, and the global resources of gas are almost as tight as those for oil: around 52 years' supply compared with about 45 years'. (In fact, since up to one-third of the energy a car uses in its lifetime is used to manufacture it, the true environmentalist would try to use an old car, not a new one.)



Cheap fuel means more cars ... but friendly taxes can save the day NTI

So what will happen? We have the prospect of another generation of cheap energy, with all the inevitable environmental problems that will result. The only things that might change that – such as a real war in the Middle East – are too horrible to contemplate. Is there no way out?

Mercifully, there is a way forward. The solution comes in two parts. The first is to apply the market mechanism through taxation. Countries need to tax energy a lot more. Governments are already desperate for revenue, for they can see that their traditional sources are going to be relentlessly cut away. Companies are already able to shift their operations around the world to minimise their tax payments and extract the maximum in incentives to invest. Increasingly, rich individuals are doing the same. The more the tax burden is shifted to employers, the more they export the jobs.

If environmental taxes were used not to spend more but specifically targeted to reduce taxes elsewhere, they might even become the one form of taxation that was positively popular

The more it is put on consumption taxes such as VAT, the more the black economy grows; in Italy it is now about a quarter of the economy.

Energy taxation, by contrast, is remarkably difficult to evade. Fuel for vehicles is tightly controlled. So, too, is electricity and gas. There may be powerful political reasons for not wanting to increase energy taxation, but attitudes there can be changed – there used, after all, to be a strong political lobby against taxing tobacco more heavily – provided people feel that the extra revenues will not disappear into the usual black hole and be wasted. If environmental taxes were not used to spend more, but specifically targeted to reduce taxation elsewhere, then they might even become the one form of additional taxation that was positively popular.

However, while there are some things that can be done to conserve energy within national boundaries, others – such as taxation of aviation fuel – need international co-operation. That leads to the second part of the solution: we need to create a culture of conservation.

One of the difficulties politicians face is taking into account the interests of future generations, both people too young to vote now and (still more difficult) the unborn. These voices are unheard at election time. Yet individually we do care about posterity. We plant gardens and trees that won't reach full maturity in our lifetimes; we seek to leave something for our children; we support charities that try to protect endangered species.

Somehow politicians need to connect the interests of future generations to those of their present electorates. One way of making this connection real is to focus on the needs of the environment, and in particular the duties of each generation to treat it in a responsible way. We can all envisage a world 25 or 30 years hence when even more acres of beautiful countryside are covered with concrete, when our air is even dirtier than it is now, and when there have been long-term changes to our weather as a result of a build-up of greenhouse gases. Governments can use this aspect of public concern about the future to draw people's attention to something they find much harder to accept: that governments now should be running budget surpluses, paying off debt as fast as they can, and encouraging people to save for their own pensions so that the next generation of people of working age will not have to pay even more to support the growing army of the retired.

So the prospect of a generation of cheap energy is in one sense a threat. Miss the chance to be wise about energy use now, and we end up with a nastier environment a generation hence. But because everyone can see that, it is also an opportunity. It is an opportunity for those with influence – not just politicians but opinion-formers in general – to show that we can connect the interests of one generation with those of the next.

We do that by accepting that the benefit of cheaper oil should be passed to society as a whole, in the form of higher energy taxes.

Who would study theology? I did, and I'll tell you why ...

CLARE GARNER

Theologians want to update their subject, but it already works as a career path

It was always the dinner party question I dreaded, because I knew what was coming next. Whenever I told someone I was reading theology, the predictable reply was: "Ah, so you want to be a priest?"

Being reasonably good-natured, I tried to laugh it off, perhaps adding: "No, actually. A nun." But deep down all the feelings of paranoia about the future, career, and Life, broke the surface of student illusion and I would ask myself why on earth I was devoting three years to studying such a dusty, crusty subject, which apparently only qualified me to serve in a ministry which did not at the time accept women. (The unvarnished truth is that it seemed a good way to get an offer of a place from a good university.)

Thirty-six academics, including the Regius Professor of Divinity at Oxford University, where theology was the first course to be devised – and where I ended up studying it – have signed up to a campaign to make UK theologians more open to contemporary culture, more international in their outlook and more responsive to other religions. As one of them says, "Theology too often seems an academic sideline, outdated and dusty, and of little relevance to modern life." Quite.

But then, all of a sudden, I find myself coming over all nostalgic. I remember, with surprising fondness, my deeply eccentric tutor, a walking authority on Mesopotamian Creation Myths, who probably dreams in Hebrew. Perhaps all that poring over sacred texts and ancient tomes in the dimming light of the Bodlean was not such a bad idea, after all.

And careerwise, at least, theology stood us in good stead. Not one of my theologian friends had to resort to donning a dog collar in order to earn a living. Between us, there is a television researcher, a theatrical agent, a Walt Disney producer, an artist, a court reporter, a primary school teacher, a financial journalist, a literary agent, a nightclub singer, and a spy. As one contemporary said: "All the people I know who read theology are either in the film industry or insane."

Susan, now a court reporter, says theology helps with her job. "You know, the Greek and the crappy Old Testament references. Judges and barristers come up with phrases like: "Tell it not in Gath, publish it not in the streets of Askelon" and I know what they're on about."

Lucy, now a primary school teacher, says the theologian mantle has its advantages. "People think you're quite scholarly. It's never had to fool people a little bit like that," she says, adding that she enjoyed telling people she wanted to be a nun. But perhaps Katherine gives the most honest answer of all. "What did I get out of reading theology? A degree from Oxford."

Another consequence of reading theology is that it leaves you with a healthy scepticism towards religion. The majority of us started out as confirmed Christians and ended up with our eyes wide open about the true origins of the Gospels.

"Where does theology get you in the end?" asks the Oxford prospectus. "One hopes that those who read theology will arrive at a better understanding of Christianity, whatever their reaction to it, and equally important, at a better understanding of themselves and their world, in whatever direction this leads them." For a few, that is the Church; for the rest of us, the World.

THE INDEPENDENT
INDEPENDENT ON SUNDAY
CVCP The voice of UK universities
Higher Education Conferences

Lifelong Learning
The Role for Universities

Thursday 5 March 1998 • Central London

The Government is due to publish a series of White Papers on Lifelong Learning in early 1998, from the DfEE, Scottish and Welsh Offices. This one day CVCP conference will explore the role for universities in developing and implementing the Government's proposals. Universities already play a significant role in lifelong learning, providing courses at all levels – HND, undergraduate, PhD and CPD. How will the developments announced in the White Papers affect this role? In particular what changes will be needed in universities' management, access, curriculum and funding? How can higher education generally develop its interface and partnership with further education to deliver the flexible learning opportunities that lifelong learning demands?

The conference is for senior managers in higher and further education, academics, careers advisers and training and personnel officers in business and funding organisations.

Speakers include

Baroness Blackstone, Minister for Education and Employment
Diana Warwick, Chief Executive, Committee of Vice-Chancellors and Principals
Professor Bob Fryer, Principal, Northern College (Lifelong Learning Advisory Group)
Dr Geraldine Kenney-Wallace, MD and VC, British Aerospace Virtual University

Delegate Fees

Full Rate Commercial, General Government £240+VAT (£42.00) Total £282.00
Reduced Rate Universities, Local Authorities £185+VAT (£32.38) Total £217.38
Supported Rate Voluntary Organisations, Charities £130+VAT (£22.75) Total £152.75

for further information and booking forms please contact:

Neil Stewart Associates

11 Dartmouth Street
London SW1H 9BL
tel 0171-222 1280
fax 0171-222 1278

Sir Elton John has a clear picture of his own style. Flashy, over the top, flamboyant: call it what you will. Sir Elton always projects a glamour all his own. You may not wish to emulate it, but you had better respect it. Photographer David LaChapelle found this out in Los Angeles recently. On a photo shoot for Citibank, the sponsors of his latest world tour, Sir Elton was asked by the snapper to push a shopping trolley containing nothing but a huge Citibank credit card. "I'll look like a big fat homeless person pushing that thing!" protested the perfectly proportioned, amazingly svelte, multi-home-owner. He immediately walked off the set and retired to his stretch limousine. When the producer tried to coax him back through a cracked window, according to the *New York Post*, Sir Elton told him, "You can take your $5m and stick it up your c**t!" Oh dearie.

Isn't this taking Minimalism a bit too far? The Met Bar, London's most fashionable drinking den until the Pharmacy opened last month, has removed all the loo seats in the Gents. When I asked the staff for a line of explanation, all I received was a knowing smirk. Can any readers help enlighten Pandora?

In late November, *The Spectator* published an article about Harry Evans, the former head of Random House in New York City and Tina Brown's husband. The article by Toby Young raised the question of Evans' sudden departure from the Newhouse empire to become editorial director of the NY *Daily News*. Was he pushed or did he jump? Young believed the former. Almost two months later, Evans sent *The Spectator* a letter – longer than Toby Young's original article – in which he demanded a "correction" and a printed apology. Frank Johnson, *The Spectator*'s editor, told Pandora, "I think we are playing a collateral part in Evans's total campaign against Toby Young." Apparently Evans has reacted badly to a New York newspaper's report that Young is hard at work on a play about the media scene in the Big Apple, particularly the feud between the *New Yorker*'s Tina Brown and *Vanity Fair*'s Graydon Carter. "And he sent another legal letter to Young," Johnson reports, "which warned that he must not ridicule him 'in any jurisdiction'". Presumably that includes Off-Broadway theatres as well. Toby Young is outraged by this infringement of his First Amendment rights. Pandora's worry is that fighting for his civil liberties may prevent Toby from finishing his marvellous play.

Anxiety about Iraqi terrorism on these shores is affecting politicians as far away as Cardiff. The bomb squad was recently called out by a local councillor when he received a suspicious package in the mail. Just before they were about to conduct a controlled explosion, one of the squad detected a peculiar sloshing noise. In fact the package was a heaping load of fresh cockles, sent by a South Wales firm, Leslie Parsons Cockles, who are lobbying against change in legislation protecting their local shellfish industry.

Remember *Primary Colors*, the scathing political satire about the first Clinton campaign? Now it has been turned into a heartwarming comedy in which John Travolta plays a cuddly Clinton-like President. How did fictional acid rain turn into tepid drizzle? Clinton met with Travolta before shooting commenced and asked the star about his well-known Scientologist convictions. "Sounds great," Clinton said and volunteered to take up the Scientologists' defence in their current epic legal battle with the German government. I suppose we're lucky that the IRA is not bankrolling a White House satire.

Pandora

20/BUSINESS

BUSINESS & CITY EDITOR, JEREMY WARNER
NEWS DESK: 0171-293 2636 FAX: 0171-293 2098 E-MAIL: INDYBUSINESS@INDEPENDENT.CO.UK
FINANCIAL JOURNAL OF THE YEAR

More than £13bn wiped off combined value of pharmaceuticals giant and SmithKline Beecham as world's largest corporate deal disintegrates

City voices fury at collapse of Glaxo merger

By Andrew Yates and Michael Harrison

Glaxo Wellcome and SmithKline Beecham felt the full force of the City's anger yesterday as the collapse of their merger talks wiped more than £13bn off their combined value and details emerged of the personality and culture clashes that brought the deal crashing down.

The collapse of the deal, which would have created the world's biggest drugs group and the third biggest global company, saw Glaxo Wellcome's shares slump by almost 13 per cent to 1657p, while SmithKline Beecham's stock fell more than 10 per cent to 724p.

The failure of the two companies to complete the merger after clashing over the question of who would run the company stunned the City but also drew widespread criticism from institutional shareholders and analysts.

Large investors warned that both companies now had a major task on their hands to rebuild shareholder confidence, particularly SmithKline, which had already called off a merger with American Home Products, the US drugs group, last month to broker a deal with Glaxo.

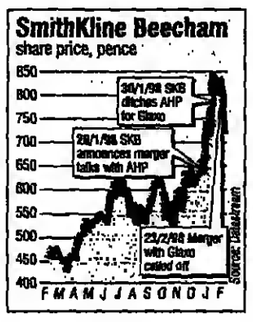
"It is very unfortunate that in the middle of a deal you have to change tack. It suggests that the two sides had not fully understood and communicated with each other before rushing headlong into a deal which is oot the best course of actioo," said one large shareholder in the two drugs groups.

Another fund manager said: "This damages the credibility of both groups. SmithKline have already jilted the bride to ruo off with the best man. Now they are cannot even get it together with the best man. We want to know more about the real reasons for the collapse in the talks."

The collapse of the deal became inevitable after the two sides clashed at a meeting in New York last Friday over the respective roles of its five-man executive board and the apportionmeot of senior managemeot jobs between Glaxo and SmithKline personnel.

Under the deal Sir Richard Sykes, the Glaxo chairman, would have become executive chairman of the merged group and Jan Leschly, chief executive of SmithKline, its new chief executive. The other executive members would have been Glaxo's chief executive, Bob Ingram, and its finance director John Coombe and SmithKline's chief operating officer, Jean Pierre Garnier.

Mr Leschly would also have been chairman of a larger executive committee. But it emerged that its powers would have been limited with Sir Richard wanting to remain in charge of all major strategic decisions. Likewise, the two sides were unable to agree on whether Mr Garnier or Mr Ingram would he chief operating officer or the division of roles in the oext tier of management.



Glaxo executives also questioned why there should be a 50:50 split of management jobs when SmithKline's pharmaceutical sales were only 55 per cent of Glaxo's. There also appears to have been a growing realisatioo on the part of Glaxo that the cultures of the two groups were incompatible. Glaxo operates as a decentralised organisation with authority and responsibility devolved to regional and divisional heads while SmithKline is driven very much from the centre.

Nevertheless, institutional shareholders were aghast that these differences had not been ironed out before the two sides disclosed their merger talks three weeks ago, stating that respective valuations and the division of top jobs had already been agreed.

"I am very perturbed that companies of this stature with experienced management teams could not put a deal together. If it is about jobs for the boys then I would have expected more from both groups," said one.

Tim Franklin, pharmaceutical analyst at Greig Middleton said: "This is a major disappointment. Both companies are under pressure to do something to maintain investor confidence."

Analysts also speculated that Glaxo may have wanted to force the disposal of SmithKline's healthcare division, which it considered to be far less important than its pharmaceutical arm, while there were also question marks over DPS, SmithKline's troubled US pharmacy benefit manager.

"You never know what nasties they discovered when they started to look at each other closely," said an institutional shareholder.

SmithKline and Glaxo now intend to launch separate charm offensives on the City over the next few days and weeks to calm investor fears and try and salvage their reputations.

The collapse of the deal robs several senior executives of huge payouts and the City of at least £100m in fees. Mr Leschly alone stood to make a paper profit of more than £17m from UK and US share options.

However, it will save thousands of jobs among the 21,000 UK workforce of the two companies. Roger Lyons, general secretary of MSF, the white collar science union, said: "This is great news. The company ignored the interests of its employees and anybody else. Now it seems that five executives have fallen out over the division of the spoils and perhaps the group's strategy."

The rationale for the merger was to create a research and development powerhouse with annual expenditure of more than £2bn a year. SmithKline has poured money into geoomics, a process designed to identify hundreds of compounds that could be used to develop drugs. This technology was supposed to have fitted neatly with Glaxo's advanced screening techniques, which analysts believe could have lead to the development of a vast array of new drugs.

One analyst said: "I would rather the two groups walk away than proceed with a turkey. When you add a poor drugs pipeline with another poor pipeline then you get an even bigger poor drugs pipeline."

Outlook, page 21

Jan Leschly: Stood to make paper profit of £17m

Wrong chemistry

- 20 Jan: SmithKline Beecham announces it is in merger talks with American Home Products
- 24 Jan: Glaxo chairman Sir Richard Sykes telephones Jan Leschly, chief executive of SmithKline, and asks whether it would be interested in a merger with Glaxo instead
- 27 Jan: Sykes flies to New York and meets Leschly in the Rockefeller Center, headquarters of SmithKline's advisers Lazard Freres, to thrash out a deal
- 30 Jan: SmithKline breaks off negotiations with AHP and announces it is in merger talks with Glaxo. Respective valuations and top management of combined group agreed in advance
- 17 Feb: SmithKline reports 7 per cent rise in pre-tax profits for 1997 and says it expects to announce the Glaxo merger in early March
- 19 Feb: Glaxo reports 9 per cent drop in 1997 profits but makes no comment on the progress of the merger talks
- 20 Feb: Sykes meets Leschly in New York and says Glaxo is not prepared to proceed on the previously agreed terms
- 22 Feb: SmithKline chairman Sir Peter Walters and Glaxo deputy chairman Sir Roger Hurn meet in London in attempt to rescue the merger
- 23 Feb: SmithKline terminates merger talks, citing 'insurmountable differences' with Glaxo over management philosophy and corporate culture
- 24 Feb: Glaxo and SmithKline shares plunge 13 per cent and 10 per cent respectively as recriminations begin and the City vents its anger

Sir Richard Sykes: Last-minute demands torpedoed deal

Drug giants ponder life after a brief encounter

The collapse of the merger poses more questions for SmithKline than Glaxo as the two drug giants map out their future strategies, write Andrew Yates and Michael Harrison.

SmithKline claims it can go it alone successfully. But trying and failed to joln forces with a competitor twice in the space of a month has severely dented its credibility. For Glaxo the deal was always an opportunistic one and yesterday it was at pains to stress that it did not oeed to pair up with another pharmaceutical partner.

Nevertheless for Sir Richard Sykes, Glaxo's chairman, it may prove a missed opportunity. He has set Glaxo the target of developing three significant medicines a year by the millennium against an industry average of one per year. That would have been a much easier goal with the economies of scale in research and development a SmithKline merger would have brought.

After an indifferent 1997, when it felt the full effects of the ending of patent protection on the blockbuster anti-ulcer drug Zantac, Glaxo's priority now will be to deliver on its promise to maintain earnings this year and then grow them significantly in 1999 oo the back of double digit sales growth.

It has two new treatments in the pipeline for HIV, where its existing drugs, Epivir, Retrovirt and Combivir notched up a 16 per cent sales increase last year to £1.8bn. Approval is also being sought in China to use Epivir as a treatment for Hepatitis B while Glaxo will file for regulatory approval later this year for a new flu treatment, Zanamivir. Other drugs in the pipeline include Seratide, a treatment for respiratory diseases, a sector of the market where Glaxo's existing drugs Flixotide and Serevent brought in sales of £1.8bn last year.

Meanwhile SmithKline's failure to forge a deal has raised concerns about the future of the group and Jan Leschly, its chief executive. Poteotial partners could have beeo frightened off by the group's antics over the past month. "Who would want to work with Jan Leschly and Jean Pierre Garnier now. They want nothing less that to run any merged company," said one analyst. A hostile bid remains unlikely, with drugs rivals unwilling to give up costs savings by paying a premium for the group.

If SmithKline remains independent it will have to prove it can produce major new drugs over the next few years to replace Paxil, the group's answer to Prozac and Augmentin, its best selling anti-biotic. Only then can it restore investor confidence.

Underlying profits rose 17 per cent to £1.65bo in 1997, but several of its most promising treatments failed to get through clinical trials and the group could struggle to produce this sort of growth rate in the future.

Let's call the whole thing off: why mergers fail

Management experts were last night quick to point out that Glaxo Wellcome and SmithKline Beecham are not unique in calling off a merger, *writes Roger Trapp*.

Earlier this month, KPMG and Ernst & Young abandoned their attempt to create the world's largest accounting and management consulting firm. Recently supermarket groups Asda and Safeway, telecoms companies BT and Cable & Wireless and – according to speculatioo – clearing banks Barclays and NatWest have all sized each other up and then backed away from a deal.

Despite a "culture of the deal" in the City, Glaxo-SmithKline is further evidence that mergers can be easy to plan but difficult to pull off. Research suggests only a small proportion of deals of this type achieve their financial targets. According to the London Business School, only about a half of acquiring companies recoup the premium above market value that they pay.

Andrew Campbell, a director of Ashridge Strategic Management Centre and co-author of the book *Synergy*, published tomorrow, said talks typically fail in this way either because of "good management reasons or management intransigence".

Companies realise the "pile of gold" capable of being mined by the two parties was illusory. Sometimes the firms lacked the skills to make it happen, or the risk of weakening rather than strengthening both companies was too great.

Since both SmithKline and Glaxo have achieved successful mergers in the past, it is unlikely such factors were at play here. This leaves management squabbles or, as Mr Campbell puts it, "deeply felt differences about what to do and how to do it".

Poor results deepen NatWest gloom

By Lea Paterson

The pressure on NatWest's embattled management team moved up another notch yesterday after the banking group published a weak set of annual results.

Group profits fell by 10 per cent, and the bank admitted to difficulties in several of its non-core businesses, in particular NatWest Markets, the investmeot banking business, and Coutts, the Queeo's bankers.

The only cheer for NatWest shareholders was the prospect of a share buy-back. The bank announced it intend to return capital to shareholders, but declined to detail the timing and the size.

Lord Alexander, the bank's chairman, said: "1997 was a difficult year, and our overall results were poor". Derek Wanless, chief executive, called the group's figures "disappointing". He added: "NatWest Markets had a dreadful year last year. It pulled down the performance of the whole of the group".

Before tax, NatWest Markets lost £706m in the year to December, a fall of £804m. Profits at Coutts, the private banking group, fell by 72 per cent after bad debt provisions rose by more than 700 per cent to £76m. Mr Wanless said the provisions related to "a small number of isolated lending problems" in the US, but declined to elaborate further on the precise nature of the difficulties.

The name NatWest Markets is to disappear once the group has completed the sale of its equities business later this year. NatWest Markets' debt business will be rebranded Greenwich NatWest and its corporate advisory business is also to be renamed.

Mr Wanless poured cold water on recent industry rumours the bank could merge with Barclays, one of its main rivals, after an initial approach from Martin Taylor, Barclays' chief executive, last summer. Mr Wanless said the competitioo authorities would be unlikely to approve such a move and the process of merger would damage both banks' franchises. Mr Wanless said he was more receptive, however, to a link-up with a company in the insurance or mortgage industry.

Analysts reacted unenthusiastically both to the results and to Mr Wanless's moves to quash merger speculation. NatWest shares finished the day at 1104p, down 21p.

Investment column, page 22

Safeway to close 44 stores as it delivers fresh profit warning

By Nigel Cope
City Correspondent

SAFEWAY, the troubled supermarket group, confirmed the City's worst fears yesterday when it delivered its third profits warning in little more than a year along with plans to close 44 stores in a move that will threaten 2,000 jobs.

The profits alert re-ignited speculation that the group might be the subject of a bid from rival Asda, which called off talks with Safeway last year. Meanwhile the City put Safeway management on notice, giving the board six months to put the company back on track or risk being ousted. "They've lost control," one analyst said. "They were so desperate to deliver sales growth that they have thrown money at the stores. I don't think the City will give them more than six months."

Colin Smith, Safeway's chief executive, denied any direct pressure from investors but added: "It is quite clear that the chief executive takes direct responsibility for the company's performance and I am doing that." He admitted the company had made mistakes but said its performaoce was improving.

Safeway has been hit by slow sales growth and rising costs which have hit margins. Start-up costs involved in setting up in Northern Ireland have been higher than expected and there will be a £30m charge to cover store closures and redundancies.

This will cut full-year profits to £375m, excluding the £30m of exceptional charges, compared to the previous year's £430m. Analysts had been forecasting £410-£440. There was also a warning on this year's profits. Safeway said they would be constrained by an extra £40m investment in improving price competitivecoess, product availability and marketing.

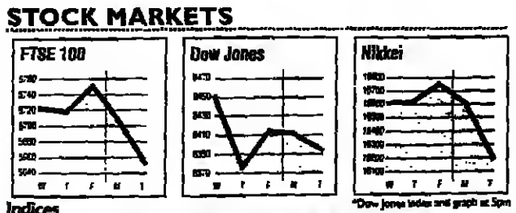
"It's an absolute disaster," one analyst said. "The only thing supporting the shares is the bid speculation." Safeway shares closed 9.5p lower at 355.5p.

In its trading update – which had beeo delayed for almost a month – Safeway said sales growth over Christmas had been just 1.1 per cent on last year but had improved to 3.2 per cent year on year in the seven weeks to 21 February.

The group is to close 22 of the older Safeway branches and sell or close 22 of the remaining Presto stores that are not suitable for conversion.

Outlook, page 21

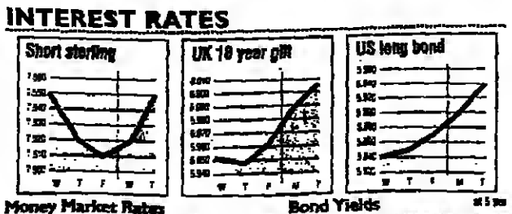
STOCK MARKETS



Indices

Index	Close	Change	Change(%)	52 wk high	52 wk low	Yield(%)
FTSE 100	5651.00	-51.80	-0.91	5793.20	4189.10	3.18
FTSE 250	5041.90	-2.90	-0.06	5049.40	4384.20	3.09
FTSE 350	2695.60	-20.50	-0.76	2751.00	2075.70	3.16
FTSE All Share	2626.01	-18.94	-0.72	2678.53	2056.07	3.14
FTSE SmallCap	2442.30	-3.20	-0.13	2446.40	2162.10	2.85
FTSE Fledgling	1336.20	-0.40	-0.03	1346.50	1225.20	3.25
FTSE AIM	1004.00	-1.30	-0.13	1138.00	965.90	0.99
Dow Jones	8390.27	-17.18	-0.20	8451.61	6356.78	1.66
Nikkei	16198.00	-411.49	-2.48	20910.79	14488.21	0.94
Hang Seng	10683.34	-1.87	-0.02	16820.31	7909.13	3.68
Dax	4599.54	-58.00	-1.25	4663.78	3175.96	1.67

INTEREST RATES



Money Market Rates

Index	3 month	1 yr chg	1 year	1 yr chg	10 year	1 yr chg	Long bond	1 yr chg
UK	7.56	1.31	7.52	0.84	6.04	-1.12	5.96	-1.38
US	5.64	0.16	5.70	-0.09	5.66	-0.74	5.94	-0.72
Japan	0.86	0.36	0.80	0.23	1.85	-0.74	2.47	-0.67
Germany	3.50	0.28	3.74	0.48	4.96	-0.59	5.54	-0.80

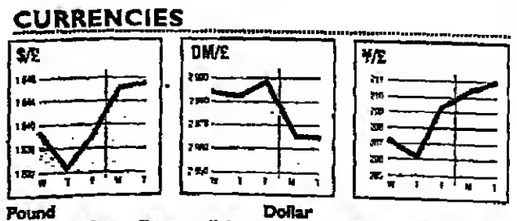
Bond Yields at 5 pm

MAIN PRICE CHANGES

Rises	Price (p)	Chg (p)	% Chge
Capita Group	389.00	35.00	9.89
Admiral	787.50	67.50	9.38
Gen Cable	125.00	8.00	6.84
Gen Accident	1453.00	81.00	6.05

Falls	Price (p)	Chg (p)	% Chge
Glaxo Wellcome	1655.00	-249.00	-13.08
SmithKline Beecham	723.50	-83.50	-10.35
Nycomed Amersham	2191.00	-104.00	-4.53
PizzaExpress	786.50	-33.50	-4.09

CURRENCIES



Pound

	at 5pm	Change	Yr Ago
Dollar	1.6469	+0.03c	1.6337
D-Mark	2.9646	+1.18pf	2.7312
Yen	211.06	+¥0.38	199.51
£ Index	104.80	+0.40	97.70

Dollar

	at 5pm	Change	Yr Ago
Sterling	0.6072	-0.01p	0.6121
D-Mark	1.8005	+0.85pf	1.6720
Yen	128.16	+¥0.25	122.15
$ Index	108.50	0.00	103.60

OTHER INDICATORS

* at $ pm	Close	Chg	Yr Ago
Brent Oil ($)	13.02	0.13	19.46
Gold ($)	291.75	-1.90	353.45
Silver ($)	5.39	-0.08	5.22

	Index	Chg	Yr ago	Next Rlse
GDP	114.30	3.00	110.97	Feb
RPI	159.50	3.30	154.40	Feb
Base Rates	7.25	6.00		

www.bloomberg.com/uk source: Bloomberg

TOURIST RATES

Australia (dollars)	2.3820	Italy (lira)	2,843
Austria (schillings)	20.15	Japan (yen)	207.83
Belgium (francs)	59.27	Malta (lira)	0.6266
Canada ($)	2.283	Netherlands (guilders)	3.2309
Cyprus (pounds)	0.8388	Norway (kroner)	12.06
Denmark (kroner)	11.00	Portugal (escudos)	292.21
Finland (markka)	8.7728	Spain (pesetas)	241.47
France (francs)	9.6084	South Africa (rand)	7.7775
Germany (marks)	2.8771	Sweden (kroner)	12.89
Greece (drachmai)	454.94	Switzerland (francs)	2.3265
Hong Kong ($)	12.35	Turkey (lira)	361.687
Ireland (punts)	1.1530	USA ($)	1.6057

Source: Thomas Cook
Rates for indication purposes only

هكذا من الأصل

هكذا من الأصل

brief encounte

elivers fresh profit warning

This was more than just a clash of egos

OUTLOOK

ON THE FALLING OUT OF GLAXO AND SMITHKLINE, AND THE PROBLEMS FACING SAFEWAY

Was it just clash of ego, or something more substantive that caused the Glaxo Wellcome merger with SmithKline Beecham to fall apart? Certainly there appears to have been a large element of the former. But equally, it doesn't seem credible that this was the whole story. With so much riding on the outcome, deals of this magnitude are not meant to fail on matters as trivial as who has the bigger office. When mergers come unstuck, the one (personality clash) is usually a symptom of deeper rooted structural and cultural differences.

In the case of big companies, these differences are often profound, despite the homogenisation of management and marketing techniques brought about by the process of globalisation. It may well be that companies of this size and ambition simply aren't meant to merge - that they are just too different and already too large to make it work. You can have all the synergies, cost cutting potential, and in this case supposed scientific advantages of combining rival drug discovery technologies, in the world but still they would not add up to anything without the cultural unity and purpose that lies at the heart of all successful modern day corporations.

The salutary lesson in pharmaceuticals is Pharmacia & Upjohn, which since the two companies were merged has degenerated into a case study of factional infighting and loss of direction. In this instance, the two companies had national and language rivalries to surmount as well as underlying cultural ones. That's not the case with Glaxo and SmithKline. None the less, the differences are big enough to set the alarm bells ringing. If clash of personality has saved these two companies from the same fate as Pharmacia & Upjohn, then shareholders may have something to be thankful for after all.

Perhaps the biggest mystery is how the two sides managed to get so close to the alter without realising their inability to work with one another. Glaxo Wellcome and SmithKline tried once before to merge - about this time last year - but the talks broke down before being made public on who would occupy the top posts. It was thought that the removal of Sean Lance as chief executive in waiting at Glaxo, had lanced that particular boil (as it were) and that the way had been cleared for marriage. Two weeks of talking turkey has revealed otherwise.

So how did Sir Richard Sykes and Jan Leschly come to make such a mistake? Part of the answer lies in the speed with which all this happened. There was SmithKline in merger talks with American Home Products. That was a deal that would have converted SmithKline finally and fully into an American company. For Sir Richard, who is passionate in his defence of Britain's world lead in pharmaceuticals, that was too much. A big part of his motivation became that of keeping SmithKline British, and he rushed into a deal which in truth needed a much longer gestation period.

Within days it became clear that the deal was misconceived, but there was too much riding on it to pull the plug. Sir Richard is a stubborn, often belligerent Yorkshireman. He was never going to work happily with the equally autocratic Jan Leschly, a go-getting, Americanised, Dane.

There were wider issues too. Was it really credible that the top, second, and third tier of jobs be shared equally between the two companies when the rationale for the merger was prescribed pharmaceuticals, where Glaxo is far bigger than SmithKline? According to insiders there was snobbery and arrogance on the part of Glaxo's people, who looked down their noses at SmithKline's over the counter and consumer products. Here then was the potential for wider ranging discord and argument.

There may have been other matters too. SmithKline is growing more strongly than Glaxo right now, but its medium term product pipeline is probably not as good and its patent protection on existing products not as waterproof as it pretends.

The general view in the City is that ego has scuppered what would have been a sensationally good merger with unparalleled potential for new product development. The truth is a good deal more complex and if by halting the process at the eleventh hour Sir Richard has caused executives more generally to question the feasibility and motives of the global mega-merger, he may have done everyone a service. But then with all those fee hungry investment bankers and corporate lawyers around, that may be expecting too much.

Wounded in the trolley wars

Profits warnings at Safeway have become a bit like buses. You wait around expecting one for ages and then several come along all at once. Three in this case - and what corkers they have been too. Just over a year ago the City was expecting Safeway to make profits of more than £500m this financial year. Now those predictions have been cut to just £350m, a reduction of 30 per cent.

The generous view is that Safeway's travails now are akin to those suffered by Sainsbury a couple of years ago - sluggish sales, problems with product availability and management complacency. In truth there are distinct differences, which may make it difficult for Safeway to emulate Sainsbury's recovery. While Sainsbury's always had a strong brand and a good store portfolio, Safeway has neither. Its brand name is by comparison minor league and its stores are worse.

And then there is the management. Colin Smith and his team seem to be all at sea, casting around for ideas. David Webster, the chairman, and the last of the Gulliver triumvirate which put Argyll on the map, seems an increasingly peripheral and disinterested figure. Indeed there could be some significant in the fact that the top three in this company are all finance directors by background, more used to financial wizardry than the cut and thrust of trading in one of Britain's most competitive industries.

Tesco, by contrast, has a marketing man at the helm - Terry Leahy. Asda is run by a highly regarded fast moving consumer goods expert - Allan Leighton. Both are a decade younger than the Safeway top brass, who continue to maintain a comfy office in Mayfair while the real business is going on in Hayes.

No wonder the company has become the subject of persistent bid speculation. With M&S ruling itself out, Asda still represents the most likely potential partner for Safeway. But while Safeway may need Asda, it is not clear Asda needs Safeway. Asda might be able to add some value with its lower priced offer and more dynamic management. But many Safeway shops are too small for Asda's non-food lines. Besides, Asda will be picking up market share anyway with the number four in the pack struggling.

Even if Asda were keen, regulatory hurdles could well prove insurmountable. The Somerfield-Kwik Save merger, which is unlikely to be blocked on competition grounds, only makes matters worse. Regulators may be prepared to allow one grocery merger through on the nod, but not two. Safeway faces the prospect of lagging further and further behind in the trolley wars - a distant fourth to the new "Big Three." It may not be entirely management's fault but the City won't be forgiving all the same. Expect more top level executive changes over the next six months.

British Midland takes shock U-turn by launching US routes

By Michael Harrison

British Midland, the country's second biggest scheduled airline, yesterday signalled a sharp change in strategy by unveiling plans to launch transatlantic services to 10 US cities.

The announcement came less than three months after the airline's chairman, Sir Michael Bishop, warned of an impending "bloodbath" on the North Atlantic and criticised moves to turn Heathrow into a "bucket and spade airport" for the US.

Up until now British Midland has concentrated on building up its domestic and European services using its privileged position at Heathrow, where it controls 14 per cent of all runway slots. Now it has applied to the Civil Aviation Authority for route licences to 10 US destinations, including New York, Washington, Atlanta, Boston, Chicago, Los Angeles and Miami. It aims to start operating services within the next 18 months with an initial fleet of three aircraft.

It will take British Midland into direct competition on US routes with British Airways and Virgin Atlantic, the only two UK carriers allowed to operate scheduled services across the Atlantic.

Austin Reid, British Midland's managing director, said the move had been driven by the impending "open skies" agreement between Britain and the US which will allow any airline to operate across the Atlantic. He also said suitable aircraft were likely to be available earlier and more cheaply because the Asian downturn was forcing carriers to reschedule or defer deliveries.

Mr Reid said British Midland would have preferred to complete its expansion into Europe before embarking on long-haul services but had been "stopped in its tracks" by the lack of available slots.

In contrast, the long-awaited British Airways-American Airlines alliance is expected to see up to 300 slots taken from the two carriers and redistributed to other transatlantic operators.

Up to five US carriers are expected to enter the market in addition to its two existing operators, American and United Airlines. "In terms of UK plc that is a rather unequal equation," Mr Reid said.

In contrast to a warning last December from his chairman's about "the air-fare war to end all air-fare wars" on the Atlantic, Mr Reid added: "We see significant benefits arising from increased competition on transatlantic routes and it is essential that the number of UK airlines servicing the market is increased to three."

Mr Reid denied that British Midland was acting as a "stalking horse" for SAS, the Scandinavian carrier which owns 40 per cent of the airline. SAS is also a member of the Star Alliance, with which the BA-AA alliance will compete.

He said that SAS has only been informed yesterday morning of British Midland's decision to apply for the route licences, though as a major shareholder it had been kept informed of the company's plans to enter the long-haul market.

British Midland is also studying the possibility of teaming up with a partner when it enters the US market.

'Open skies will lead to a bloodbath across the Atlantic. There will be the air-fare war to end all air-fare wars. We don't want to see Heathrow become a bucket-and-spade airport for the US'

Sir Michael Bishop, chairman, British Midland, 8 December, 1997

'We see significant consumer benefits arising from increased competition on transatlantic routes and it is essential that the number of UK airlines serving the market is increased to three'

Austin Reid, chief executive, British Midland, 24 Febraury, 1998, announcing plans to fly to 10 US destinations

Be prepared for euro, Brown urges

By Diane Coyle
Economics Editor

GORDON BROWN, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, yesterday stressed the importance of being ready for the start of the single European currency on 1 January 1999 even though the Government has postponed British entry. "We must be ready to get the most from it for Britain," he told MPs, reaffirming the Government's policy of enthusiasm in principle but caution in practice.

The Chancellor's evidence before the Treasury Committee of the House of Commons generated unusual excitement when Quentin Davies, a Tory Euro-enthusiast, accused the Government of "running away from taking a decision" because of pressure from Rupert Murdoch and his stable of newspapers.

But Mr Brown denied the charge that his five economic tests for British membership were a pretence. "Other countries have been preparing for monetary union for almost six years now. We have not made those preparations," he said, explaining the decision to stay out of the first wave.

The Chancellor refused to answer repeated questions about whether the UK would be prepared to veto the membership of any other country which did not meet the strict letter of the Maastricht criteria for membership.

"Over a period of time there have been considerable advances," he said, asked about whether all those countries which wanted to join would meet the targets for the levels of budget deficits and debt set out in the treaty.

Britain, which holds the EU presidency, would look carefully at the reports from the European Commission and European Monetary Institute next month, Mr Brown said. He refused to be drawn on which countries he thought would qualify.

The Chancellor emphasised the practical preparations that would be needed before the UK could join and the need for sustainable economic convergence. He confirmed it would be possible for companies to have their shares quoted and to pay taxes in euros from next January.

Mr Brown said the UK and other European countries had an agenda of economic reform ahead of them. The single currency would satisfy his test on jobs – one of the five set out by the Treasury – if this programme of structural reform was under way by early in the next parliament.

Separately, Helen Liddell, Economic Secretary to the Treasury, launched a green paper on the future of official statistics. The paper set out four options for an independent national statistical service.

Ms Liddell said there were widespread doubts about the validity of many statistics, and the Government attached the greatest importance to improving their integrity. The option under which some departments would keep control of their statistics, subject to an independent commission or governing board, looks the most likely outcome.

Funds warn on Budget high-rate tax hit threat to pension saving

By Andrew Verity

PENSION funds yesterday fired a shot across the Treasury's bows amid mounting speculation that the Government will slash tax relief for higher-rate taxpayers in the forthcoming Budget.

The National Association of Pension Funds, whose members control £350bn of employees' savings, is warning that a cut would prompt both employers and employees to flock away from pension saving. A higher-rate taxpayer who pays £60 to a pension currently receives an extra £40 in higher-rate tax relief. A basic-rate taxpayer making the same payment sees just £23 going in to a scheme.

The extra tax relief for higher-rate payers costs the Treasury £800m a year, prompting speculation that Gordon Brown, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, will limit tax relief to the basic rate of tax in his 17 March Budget.

The NAPF warned that a cut would "torpedo" schemes to which 8 million workers belong. Peter Murray, NAPF chairman, said: "Employers who provide occupational pension schemes will put up with only so much before they decide it is no longer worth the cost and hassle of coping with constant change."

Employees making payments from their own pay would be worse off than those in non-contributory schemes. An employee earning £40,000 contributing 5 per cent would see a reduction in take-home pay of £340 a year.

Greenspan sees moderate growth as Asia crisis bites

The Federal Reserve forecasts moderate and balanced US growth this year with the fall-out from Asia keeping inflation in check, Fed chairman Alan Greenspan said yesterday, suggesting the Fed may leave borrowing costs unchanged for some time to come. While 1998 began with considerable momentum, the Fed expects growth of 2-2.75 per cent this year, as the effects of Asia's crisis start to be felt. However, given the economy's exemplary performance so late into an expansion, the forecasts are "more tentative than usual", Mr Greenspan said.

Holiday opening for Liffe

The London International Financial Futures Exchange (Liffe) is to open for business on May 4, the May Day bank holiday, because of a crunch EU meeting scheduled for the weekend of May 3 and 4, at which the EU will decide which countries will be included in EMU's first wave. Daniel Hodson, Liffe's chief executive, said: "Given the importance of the meeting and its impact on financial markets, it is Liffe's intention that the exchange will meet market needs by opening for trading on the Bank Holiday."

JP Morgan to cut jobs

JP Morgan, the US investment bank, is to fire around 700 employees, or nearly 5 per cent of its work force, in an attempt to boost profitability. The layoffs, the majority of which will be in the bank's Asian operations, will begin immediately. The cuts are likely to be accompanied by a one-off severance-related charge in the first quarter. In an internal company memo, Douglas Warner, the bank's chairman and chief executive, also raised the possibility of a merger with another firm, although he concluded: "It remains our conviction that no strategic merger yet envisioned matches the promise of our own growth strategy if we execute it successfully."

Siebe buys software supplier

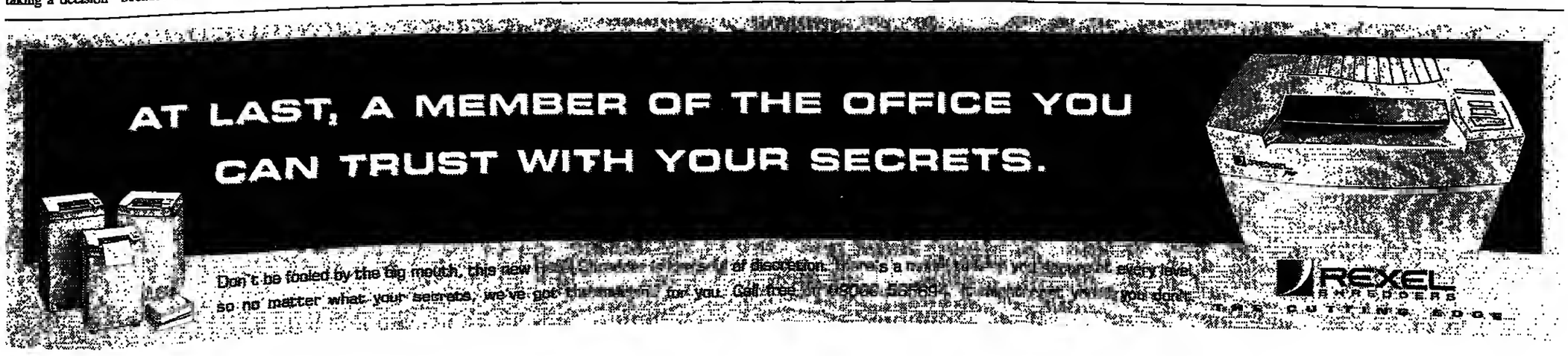
Engineering group Siebe is buying Wonderware, a supplier of Microsoft Windows-based software for the industrial automation market, for £228m to broaden its software product line. Wonderware makes software for Microsoft's Windows operating system that helps companies such as Coca-Cola control and monitor factory processes.

Standard investment house

Standard Life, the life assurer, is to form a new investment house. The new company, Standard Life Investment Management, will be run as a separate business within the Standard Life Group. Standard Life, which has been gradually building up its investment management business over the last four years, said it was "ready to compete with the established players in fund management". Sandy Crombie, currently group chief investment manager, will become chief executive of the new subsidiary.

Capita targets recruitment

Capita, the fast-expanding outsourcing group, yesterday said it expected human resources to be its next area for growth. The company, which has already won numerous lucrative outsourcing deals in local and central government, is offering companies a full range of services ranging from recruitment to payroll management. Rod Aldridge, chairman, said yesterday that companies increasingly view these activities as peripheral. "Obviously staff are core for most companies, but many are realising they don't need to control the recruitment process," he said. His comments came as Capita reported a 49 per cent increase in pre-tax profits to £17.9m on turnover up 55 per cent at £173m.



THE INVESTMENT COLUMN

EDITED BY ANDREW YATES

Sema's rating is hard to justify

PROFITS up 28 per cent to £64.1m, shares down 7.5p to 1885p: nothing could better illustrate the inflated expectations in the information technology sector than investors' reaction to Sema's results. And who can blame them?

The shares, which have risen by 43 per cent since the beginning of December, now trade on a multiple of 41 times the forecast for this year's earnings by broker Credit Suisse First Boston. Sema is growing quickly, but is it expanding fast enough to justify that kind of rating?

Pierre Bonelli, Sema's chief executive, would like you to think so. He points to the company's swelling order book – bolstered just last week by a five-year £305m deal to take over the running of the Benefits Agency's medical services division. Then there's the contribution from recent acquisitions, which chipped in operating profits of £4.5m on sales of £75.6m. Mr Bonelli also thinks there's room to improve profit margins from their current levels.

Finally, there's the potential to expand in the US – a move that was ruled out until the middle of last year because US regulators deemed Sema to be a subsidiary of Paribas, the French bank which is one of its major shareholders.

That said, there are plenty of reasons to be sceptical. For one, Sema's underlying growth rate is not as marvellous as the headline figures suggest. Strip out currencies and acquisitions, and turnover was up 14 per cent last year – creditable, no doubt, but oot spectacular in this booming industry. Admiral, Sema's smaller rival, yesterday reported a 29 per cent increase in turnover, with no contribution from acquisitions at all.

On margins, too, Sema falls short. Admiral's operating margins increased to 14.5 per ceot last year. Sema's edged up to just 6 per cent. Although the company is aiming to increase its return on sales, higher R&D spending on its software products will also push up costs.

Then there is the US. Sema clearly needs an acquisitioo, but seems confused about what to aim for. Mr Bonelli reckons there are several options: buy a series of smaller product companies, splash out up to $1bo (£610m) oo a Sema lookalike, spend a similar amount on a company specialising in, say, telecoms, or get into the market through outsourcing cootracts. All that's clear is that Sema still has to make up its mind.

In the meantime, Sema will have to keep on hiring staff. The company needs to take on 1,000 workers this year to handle all the work, and will need another 1,000 to replace the ones who leave for jobs elsewhere. Mr Bonelli doesn't seem to think this is a problem. But as rival Logica found to its cost last year, the market is unforgiving about slips in this particular area.

Let's be clear: Sema is a quality company. It's well managed, its track record is admirable, it's in a fast-growing industry, and the opportunities for future growth are mouth-watering. But lemming-like buying by British fund managers in receot months means that its share price valuation is oow completely out of kilter with any reasonable assessment of its prospects.

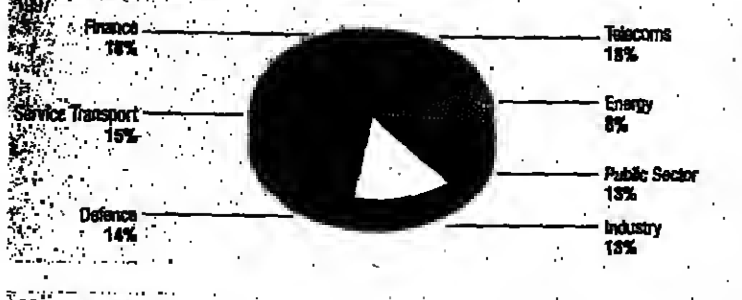
Given the real possibility of skills shortages restraining growth or of Sema overpaying for an acquisition in the US, all the risk is on the downside. Sell.

Sema: At a glance

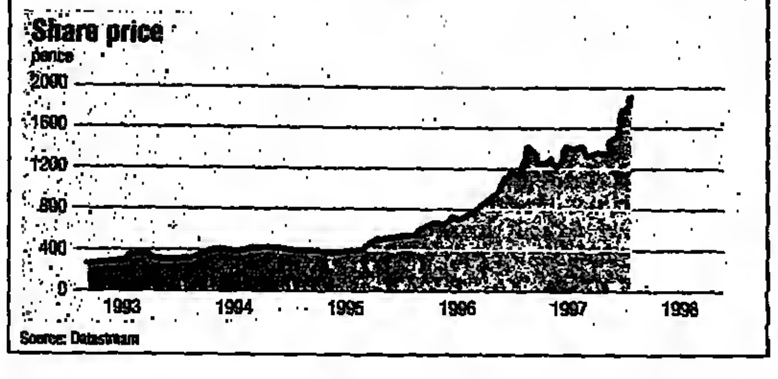
Market value: £2.17m, share price 1885p (-7.5p)

Five-year record	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997
	Year to 31 Dec				
Turnover (£m)	502	596	678	927	1,130
Pre-tax profits (£m)	38.1	29.5	36.9	50.0	64.1
Earnings per share (p)	24.5	20.8	24.3	30.9	39.1
Dividends per share (p)	3.1	4.1	5.0	6.0	7.3

Turnover by sector



Share price



Source: Datastream

NatWest has yet more problems

IN THE normal course of things, a company's board tries to put the best possible spin on annual results. In corporate-speak, "excellent progress" tends to mean "satisfactory" to you or me, and when Mr or Mrs Chief Executive says "satisfactory", it's usually safe to assume things haveo't gone quite as well as planned.

What to make, then, of NatWest's annual results, published yesterday and described variously by its managemeot team as "poor", "disappointing" and "dreadful"? Well, in this particular case, investors would be wise if they were to believe the hype. Pre-tax profits for the year to December dropped by 10 per cent to £1.0bn, largely because of last year's débâcle at NatWest Markets (NWM), the group's investment banking arm. NWM turned in a pre-tax loss of £706m, compared to a small profit of £98m in 1996.

The relatively mild reaction in the City – NatWest shares finished the day down 21p at 1104p – was due to the fact that everybody had been well prepared for the NWM hit. When NatWest announced the sale of its equities operations last year, it also warned that NWM was going to put a sizeable hole in its 1997 figures.

If it were simply the case that NatWest had now washed its hands of an expensive mistake – namely its equity business – and that the things elsewhere were hunky-dory, investors would have every reason to feel upbeat. Unfortunately for NatWest, things do not seem quite so clear-cut. Yesterday's results contained some worrying signs that, outside the group's core UK bank, there could be more pain in store for shareholders in the months to come.

Coutts, the private banking arm, had a particularly bad time. Its pre-tax profits slumped by 72 per cent to £29m, following over-hasty US expansion. The picture wasn't much better at Gartmore, the fund manager, and Greenwich NatWest, the former NWM debt business.

Gartmore lost a series of high-profile institutional accounts during the year, and business at Greenwich NatWest was hit by uncertainty surrounding NatWest's future strategy for NWM. Neither is it clear where NatWest's corporate advisory boutiques now fit into the group's strategy, given that part of the rationale for buying these businesses was that they generated synergies with the now defunct equities arm.

Shareholders can take some consolatioo from the performance of the UK bank, which saw pre-tax profits surge by almost 50 per cent to £962m. With a wide-ranging rationalisatioo and modernisation programme now well under way, the UK bank should continue to increase its profits in the years to come.

Given the worries over NatWest's non-core businesses, why has the stock soared in recent months? The answer is quite simple: because of bopes that some other bank will come along and put NatWest out of its misery. The banking sector has been rife with merger rumours of late, many of them centring oo NatWest. But, given its recent attempts to dispel rumours of an up-and-coming deal with arch-rival Barclays, these bopes look increasingly desperate. Unless a concrete bid materialises, the shares will probably slide. Estimates from Salomoo Smith Barney put NatWest on forward p/e of around 16, making it look pricey compared to the rest of the banking sector. Steer clear.

Skills head wants tougher regime on qualifications

By Barrie Clement
Labour Editor

BRITAIN'S new skills "czar" has attacked the present qualifications system for being wide open to abuse. Chris Humphries, who has just been appointed to lead the Government's training taskforce, believes there should be a much tougher regime to reassure employers about the quality of National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs).

His call comes as the Government today prepared to launch its proposals for a university for industry.

Mr Humphries, currently chief executive of the TEC National Council, will combine his part-time job at the taskforce with his new post as director general of the British Chambers of Commerce.

In an interview with *The Independent*, Mr Humphries pointed out that there was a clear "over-supply" of trainees studying tourism, leisure, media and healthcare, and a shortage of people qualifying in information technology and engineering.

The skills taskforce would need to identify and respond to industry's skills needs. There should be better information on which youngsters, parents and employers could base decisions.

He contended, however, that it was often a mistake to talk in general terms about skills shortages. In the coostructioo industry, for instance, shortages were specific to certain geographical areas.

He argued that there should be a means through which funding could be directed where it was most needed.

It was clear there was "potential to exploit" the system of training accreditation, he said, particularly where the organisatioo providiog the training was also awarding the qualificatioos. "The system is not consistently bad, but it is not consistently good."

While large organisations like the City & Guilds and the Royal Society of Arts could not afford to award spurious qualifications there were hundreds of other bodies which might be less scrupulous, be believed.

Arriva set to expand Dutch bus operations

ARRIVA, the transport group, yesterday flagged the prospect of further expansion in Europe, as it unveiled record pre-tax profits fuelled by receot bus acquisitions.

Gordoo Hodgson, chief executive, said Arriva was in talks with an unnamed party about expanding its Dutch bus operations and was upbeat about a deal being struck soon.

"Talks are under way and I would be disappointed if something did not happen as a result," said the Arriva boss. He said the finance department had been busy lining up £100m worth of financing to fund expansion.

Arriva, which receotly changed its name from Cowie Group, fleshed out its expansionist ambitions after reporting record year pre-tax profits of £101m, a rise of 24 per cent.

Turnover at the bus to motor retailing group rose to £1.42bn and the annual dividend was 13.5p per share. Shares rose 13p to close at 376.5p.

The main aim for the coming year was to build operations in Europe after becoming "one of Europe's top five private bus operators", Mr Hodgsoo said. A move into rail for the first time was a oatural transitioo.

Ewart receives fifth bid approach in two days

THE acrimonious battle for control of Ewart, the Belfast-based property group, took a bizarre twist yesterday when the company received its fifth bid approach in the space of two days.

The company revealed it was considering a "bona fide approach from a substantial UK listed company" that might lead to a takeover offer. The news came after two rival companies, Moyne and Dunloe House, each put in two bids.

On Mooday, Brian O'Connor, Ewart chairman, urged shareholders to accept a 75p-a-share offer from Dunloe House, an Irish property developer. A majority of indepeodeot board members then said they had agreed to accept a 79p-a-share offer from Moyne, a shelf company created for the bid by drinks eotrepreneur Paul Hunt. The chief executive at one stage threatened to take legal action against Mr O'Connor.

Yesterday Moyne upped its bid to 81p a share, an offer that was matched by Dunloe House.

In a statemeot, Ewart said the new mystery offer matched the existing offers and would also provide a paper alternative at a "tangibly higher level".

COMPANY RESULTS

	Turnover £	Pre-tax £	EPS	Dividend
Admiral (F)	117.2m (90.8m)	17.6m (11.2m)	17.8p (11.6p)	2.9p (2.25p)
Access Plus (F)	16.23m (10.81m)	2.4m (1.62m)	10.36p (7.68p)	4.45p (3.5p)
Almasec Group (I)	81.0m (84.9m)	4.3m (8.5m)	7.5p (10.8p)	2.45p (2.45p)
Arriva (F)	1.42bn (1.13bn)	101.0m (81.2m)	36.1p (33.2p)	13.5p (12.4p)
Capita Group (F)	173.0m (112.0m)	18.3m (12.3m)	6.51p (4.75p)	2.1p)1.6p)
Carisbrooke Shipping (F)	12.18m (12.71m)	-1.59m (1.02m)	-16.3p (10.9p)	1.0p)
Charterhouse Comm (I)	2.63m (2.21m)	0.501m (0.366m)	0.36p (0.23p)	0.12p
Dixon Motors (F)	413.6m (262.6m)	8.7m)5.5m)	28.3p (19.9p)	7.5p (6.0p)
Easynet (F)	7.43m (2.16m)	-1.32m (-0.971m)	-6.43p (-6.34p)	
NatWest (F)	- (-)	1.01bn (1.12bn)	46.9p (66.6p)	32.2p (29.0p)
Pillco (I)	24.20m (21.69m)	2.1m (1.82m)	10.4p (7.7p)	3.0p (2.5)
Radius (F)	27.7m (27.3m)	1.12m (1.59m)	2.9p (4.1p)	0.55p (1.65p)
Sema Group (F)	1.30bn (0.927m)	64.1m (50.0m)	39.14p (30.94p)	7.3p (6.0p)
SEET (I)	7.06m (4.01m)	0.408m (0.109m)	5.7p (2.17p)	
Steel Burrill Jones (F)	37.7m (39.9m)	-1.37m (2.21m)	-2.59p (3.09p)	1.5p (1.5p)
William Sinclair (I)	24.33m (21.91m)	2.82m (2.24m)	3.6p (6.9p)	2.4p (2.1p)
George Wimpey (F)	1.22bn (1.26bn)	63.1m (31.5m)	12.06p (5.84p)	5.7p (5.5p)

(F) - Final (I) - Interim † EPS is pre-exceptionals *Dividend to be paid as a FID

Time for Lower Factory Prices and the Best Showroom Service

We cut out the middleman
We sell to you direct because, with no middleman, it means lower prices for you. Our own showroom staff who specialise only in PC systems serve you directly and can give you better advice to enable you to select the right system.

We design our PCs to be future-proof
We make all the PCs we sell in Britain and can incorporate the latest PC technology to give you better specifications. Systems are designed to be easily upgradeable so that they will grow with you and not become outdated.

Try before you buy
Visit your local showroom and take a closer look at the quality and performance of our systems. Pick-up our PC Buyer's Guide and speak to our staff who will give sound specialist advice, in jargon-free plain english.

We get you started
Our PCs are pre-configured and ready for use with preloaded software. Simply plug in and switch on. Our unique 90 minute VHS video trainer and user guide covers all aspects of normal PC usage and you can watch it and learn from it at your own pace and at times convenient to you.

10 years of service and support
Our service is also direct and we have been serving customers for over 10 years. Who else can provide the best service but the people who designed and built your PC. Each store has trained technicians and an in-store service centre in addition to direct hotline telephone support.

Money back guarantee
Buy with confidence with complete peace of mind. We believe our products, services and prices represent the best value in the UK. If you are not happy for whatever reason, you can return your PC to us within 14 days for a full refund excluding delivery costs.

41 UK Showrooms

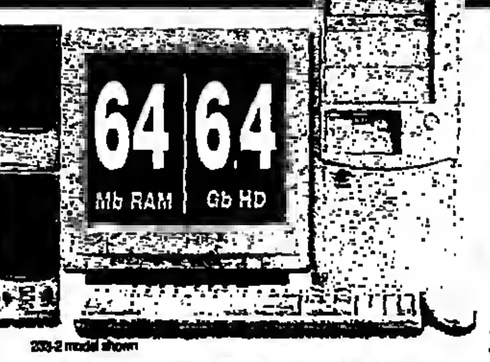
Other Time Showrooms

POWERHOUSE

pentium
200M Family PC
- Intel 200MHz Pentium processor with MMX technology
- 32Mb RAM
- 4.3Gb hard disk
- 56k Voice modem
- 24x MAX CD-ROM
- 3D wavetable sound
- 4Mb SiS Advanced Graphics using system RAM
- 14" SVGA colour screen (15" optional extra)
- IBM GOLD speech recognition
- VideoPhone receive
- SF525 stereo-speaker system
- Over £800 software bundle
- Network £1 Rally game
- 90 Minute VHS video trainer
- Year 2000 compliant
- ATX midi tower with all standard features
- 14 Day money back guarantee
- FREE Epson 300 colour printer

Product codes 14" 206 15" 207

£799
£938.83 inc. VAT



233-2 model shown

FREE PRINTER

Free Epson Stylus Color 300 colour inkjet printer. Higher spec Epson Stylus Color 400 with M-2 models. Select required PC cable.

Microsoft Multimedia software included with M-2 models

200M-2 Family PC

The Fastest Systems

pentium II
233-2 Family PC
- Intel 233MHz Pentium II processor with MMX technology
- 64Mb RAM
- 6.4Gb hard disk
- 56k Voice modem
- 24x MAX CD-ROM
- 3D wavetable sound
- 4Mb ATI AGP x2 3D graphics
- 15" SVGA colour screen (17" optional extra)
- IBM GOLD speech recognition
- SF525 stereo speaker system
- Over £800 software bundle
- Network O Rally game
- 90 Minute VHS video trainer
- Year 2000 compliant
- ATX midi tower with all standard features
- 14 Day money back guarantee
- FREE Epson 300 colour printer

£1099
£1291.33 inc. VAT

233M-2 Family PC

EXEC Models

Buy Now...Pay August '98
INTEREST FREE CREDIT
0% APR

Freephone Time Now!
0800 771107

Sales Lines Open: Monday - Friday 8.30am-7.00pm, Saturday 9.00am-5.00pm.
All offers end 28th February

TIME COMPUTER SYSTEMS

Springtime in the city

2 for 1 hotel offer

INTER·CONTINENTAL HOTELS AND RESORTS

The Independent and Independent on Sunday have joined forces with Inter-Continental Hotels to offer readers a unique 2 for 1 weekend promotion. Available at a selection of hotels in the UK and Europe, rates for these special weekends include breakfast for 2 each morning and all taxes and service charges. This fantastic 2 for 1 deal, which represents a 50% saving on the usual weekend rates, is available exclusively to Independent readers, and is on offer every Friday, Saturday and Sunday from now right through until the end of April 1998.

HOW TO BOOK
Simply collect 4 out of the 7 tokens we will be printing every day until Friday 27th February. Choose the dates that you want to stay and telephone the Inter-Continental Central Reservation office on 0181 847 2277. Callers should quote 'The Independent Weekend Promotion' when making their booking. On your arrival at the hotel you should present your tokens in order to qualify. All bookings are subject to availability.

EASTER BONUS
As an extra bonus for Independent readers, these amazing weekend rates will be available throughout the Easter period at the London and Edinburgh hotels. The 2 for 1 deal (or 4 for 2 during Easter) will be on offer for a period of five nights, starting from Thursday 9th April right through to Monday 13th April inclusive.

Hotel Inter-Continental London******
Located just off Park Lane, overlooking Hyde Park Corner and Buckingham Palace Gardens. With 458 elegantly decorated bedrooms and suites, a fabulous French Restaurant, informal coffee shop and modern health club and gym, the hotel boasts all the services and facilities you would expect from one of the capital's premier hotels. A brand new Club Inter-Continental executive floor is being launched in March.
Rate(per room per weekend) £189

May Fair Inter-Continental London******
On Stratton Street, this five star deluxe hotel is perfect for reaching the Bond Street shops, royal parks, theatres and galleries. It offers superb accommodation and facilities including a stylish, contemporary restaurant, Opus 70, popular cafe, traditional pub and sophisticated piano bar. Its health club boasts a swimming pool, gym, saunas and solarium.
Rate(per room per weekend) £195

Churchill Inter-Continental London******
In Portman Square in the centre of the West End with the Oxford Street just two minutes walk. Recently renovated to the highest standards, the stunning Churchill Inter-Continental boasts luxurious accommodation, a superb restaurant, Clementines and a new Churchill Bar & Cigar Divan. Guests have the use of a private tennis court just opposite the hotel.
Rate(per room per weekend) £189

Elegance and comfort at The George Inter-Continental, Edinburgh

The Forum Hotel London
Perfectly situated close to the shopping area of Kensington and Knightsbridge. With 27 floors, many of the hotels 910 bedrooms and suites enjoy superb views over the London skyline. A wide choice of restaurants and bars include the Gloucester Road Deli with its authentic 'New York' atmosphere and the Kensington Garden Café.
Rate(per room per weekend) £129

The George Inter-Continental Edinburgh
This first class hotel occupies a classic Georgian Building dating from the 18th century. In the heart of the city, its 195 bedrooms and suites enjoy superb views over the city and the Firth of Forth. Dining options include a choice of three restaurants and bars including the recently refurbished Carvers Restaurant, housed in one of the most spectacular dining halls in Edinburgh.
Rate(per room per weekend) £109

The 2 for 1 deal is also available at Inter-Continental and Forum hotels in Brussels, Berlin and Budapest. Special weekend rates are also available to at a selection of other Inter-Continental Hotels in Europe including Paris, Vienna, Rome, Cannes and Prague (prices on application).

token 5
THE INDEPENDENT
INDEPENDENT ON SUNDAY
INTER·CONTINENTAL HOTELS AND RESORTS

terms and conditions
To participate in the offer you must collect 4 differently numbered tokens from the seven we will print between February 21 and February 27. These tokens will be redeemable at any of the Inter-Continental and Forum hotels listed in The Independent and Independent on Sunday. All prices shown are per room per weekend (couples for two nights) including full English breakfast and VAT. All bookings must be made using the Inter-Continental Central Reservation line. These special weekend rates for a minimum 2 night stay are available on Friday, Saturday and Sunday nights from Friday 27 February until April 26 1998 (but include the Easter period as noted above). Rates are payable in local currency and do not include travel. This offer cannot be used in conjunction with any other promotion. All reservations are subject to availability.

Each of the hotels in the famous Inter-Continental Hotels and Resorts Group is equipped with the highest level of service and facilities including: superb accommodation, great restaurants, room service, laundry and dry cleaning, in room satellite TV with movies, radio, minibar, direct dial telephone, complemented by the friendly, efficient service you would expect from the world's most global hotel.

A fantastic choice of locations is available, and each of the participating hotels is perfectly located for the city's shopping areas, attractions and places of interest.

طبق الأصل

هكذا من الأصل

wants tougher qualifications

...wart receives fifth bid approach in two days

...ne in the city

Footsie recovers from merger breakdown shock

MARKET REPORT

DEREK PAIN

THE STOCK market survived the collapse of the world's biggest merger without needing any shock treatment. In early trading Footsie was off 117.9 points. By the close the fall had been cut to 51.8 at 5,651.

Yet **Glaxo Wellcome** and **SmithKline Beecham** were responsible for a 75.1 points decline. So if the falling out of the two drug giants was stripped out of the calculation Footsie would have ended in the black, up 23.3.

Glaxo crashed 247p (after 314p) to 1,657p and SB 83p (after 102p) to 724p. When the drug-induced delirium first hit the market Glaxo jumped to 1,983p and SB to 845p. Glaxo is near its pre-merger price; SB, which had been buoyed by its aborted deal with American Home Products, is 56p below its level when the Glaxo deal was announced.

The market also had to contend with the poor results from **National Westminster Bank** (off 21p at 1,104p) and another trollyful of woe from **Safeway** (9.5p down at 355.5p).

The breakdown of the world's biggest merger, which would have created a £100bn drugs behemoth, sent shock waves through early trading. But although turnover in the two thwarted drug groups was heavy the market quickly swung round to the view that the various bid permutations had, if anything, increased.

The fact that the merger had been killed by a personality clash rather than any accountancy or drug problems also helped sentiment.

The stock shortage was another factor. Shares are now in short supply. The rush of share buybacks and the tendency to use cash, rather than equity, in takeovers has lowered the share pool at a time when many fund managers, after two years on the sidelines, are scrambling to build their portfolios. An upheaval of the Glaxo/SB variety is, therefore, a blessing to equity-short fund managers.

With the cult of the merger still very strong there was hardly time for the Glaxo/SB last rites before the speculation resumed. The market opted for an old favourite – money shares and in particular insurances.

The globalisation argument applies to financials as well as drugs. And with three insurers reporting today the temptation to alight again on the sector proved irresistible.

Commercial Union, **GRE** and **General Accident** were in the frame. A deal involving any two of the three was the popular guess as GA climbed 83p to 1,455p; GRE 20.75p to 440.75p and CU 24p to 1,130p.

Other takeover candidates were pressed into service. **Reckitt & Colman**, with Unilever the alleged predator, jumped 42p to 1,105p and **Standard Chartered** (again) 16p to 758p.

Away from bid speculation **BAT Industries** rose 17p to 598p with Dresdner Kleinwort Benson suggesting a 668p target, and a Goldman Sachs upgrading helped **Cadbury Schweppes** 13.5p higher to 770p, a peak.

Utilities were depressed by fears of a tougher regulatory climate. **Severn Trent** underlined worries that the Government may clamp down next month on profits and dividends at an analysts' presentation. **United Utilities** fell 30p to 772p; **Thames Water** 18p to 847p and **PowerGen** 11p to 812p. **Severn Trent** sank 16p to 902p. Morgan Stanley is cautious on the sector.

SkyePharma gained 7.5p to 62.5p following a link with SmithKline over its Paxil treatment for nervous disorders. SG Securities sees SkyePharma moving into profits with a £3.3m outcome next year and £50m in the year 2,000.

Scotia fell 30p to 322.5p after a licence application was withdrawn.

Wolverhampton & Dudley Breweries firmed to 497.5p after buying back 1.5 million shares at 495p.

Manchester Utd, the best performing football share, discovered that being top of the Premiership is not enough to bolster its investment appeal. The shares fell 4p to 141p, lowest for more than a year. Still any investor (or supporter) who backed the 1991 flotation is still sitting on a handsome profit. The issue price was around 18p.

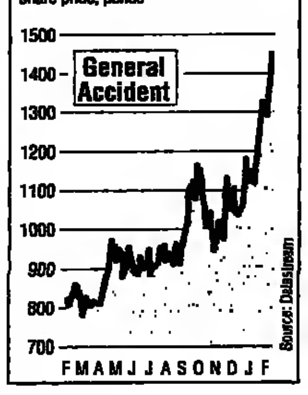
MSB International, an IT group, gained 35p to 807.5p as Merrill Lynch started researching the company with a buy recommeodation.

Dudley Jenkins, a mailing group, said it did not know any reason for the strength of its shares and replaced a 22.5p gain with a 12p fall. DRS Data said there was no "underlying reason" for the weakness of its shares; they promptly reduced a 4.5p fall, ending 2p off at 16p.

Delyn, on the arrival of the Rubin family with 25.04 per cent, rose 10p to 127.5p, and Leslie Wise, where the privately owned Joe Bloggs is said to hover, hardened a further 2p to 16p.

Share Spotlight

share price, pence



TAKING STOCK

Shares of BBA, the engineer, have under-performed yet, points out stockbroker Greig Middleton, it has little Far Eastern exposure and sterling's strength is often offset. It sees profits improving £12m to £153m last year and reaching £174m this year. The shares were little changed at 418.5p.

Deep Sea Leisure rose 5p to 320p, a high. The shares have climbed from 167.5p in the past three months, prompting predictable stories that a predator is eyeing the group. DSL operates an aquarium in North Queensferry, Scotland, and is near to opening another between Chester and Ellesmere Port.

Nat Solomon, former chief of Pleasurama and Tottenham Hotspur, has become chairman of Ofex-traded Distinctive Leisure, a little pubs group. He has acquired 500,000 shares (1.7 per cent) at 3p. The Ofex price is 2.5p.

Share Price Data

Prices are in sterling except where stated. The yield is the latest twelve months' declared gross dividend as a percentage of the share price. The price/earnings (P/E) ratio is the shareprice divided by last year's earnings per share, excluding extraordinary items but including exceptionals.
Other details: Ex rights; x Ex-dividend; a Ex-all; s Suspended; p Partly Paid; np Nil Paid; *AIM.
Gilt Prices are Bloomberg Generics. Source: Bloomberg

The Independent Teleshare - Tel. 0891 - 201 200

To access Real-Time Share Prices, 24 hours a day, call 0891 – 201 200.

You will hear the current FTSE 100 Index followed by a Stock Market Summary Report.

You can interrupt at any time to hear a Real-Time Share Price by keying * plus a 4-digit 'code' from the listings on this page.

To get a Membership Number to set-up your Portfolio facility, please call the Help Desk on 0171-729-8288 (during business hours).

For help with the service, including the Portfolio facility, call the Help Desk on 0171-729-8288.

(TIS plc, London EC2A 4PJ). 0891 calls cost 50p per minute.

Seaq volume: 902.4m trades 73,368 Gilts index 103.36 -0.28

Market Leaders: Top 20 volumes at 5:00pm

Stock	Vol	Stock	Vol	Stock	Vol	Stock	Vol
Shell Transport-reg	57.52m	HSBC Hldgs	13.78m	Nat Westminster	11.80m	Vodafone Group	7.26m
Smithkline Beecham	47.51m	Emerald Energy	13.42m	BAT Inds	9.94m	Mayflower Corp	7.14m
Glaxo Wellcome	34.20m	Brit Petroleum	13.0m	Centrica	9.37m	Unilever PLC	6.86m
BTR PLC	18.71m	Reuters Grp PLC	12.59m	Brit Steel	7.80m	Woolwich PLC	6.80m
		Safeway PLC	[illegible]	Lloyds TSB Group	7.45m	Diageo PLC	6.58m

FTSE 100 index hour by hour

Open	5702.8		11:00	5640.7	Down 62.1	14:00	5641.6	Down 61.2
9:00	5623.0	Down 79.8	12:00	5635.2	Down 67.6	15:00	5640.4	Down 62.4
10:00	5642.9	Down 59.9	13:00	5639.8	Down 63.0	16:00	5646.0	Down 56.8
						Close	5647.4	Down 55.4

Government Securities

Recent Issues

Stock	Price	Chg(p)
Bowe	108.00	-0.0
Marchpole	39.50	0.00

source: Bloomberg www.bloomberg.com/uk

first direct
do you want everyday banking to be free?
for 24 hour banking call free
0800 24 24 24
Free banking means that there are no charges for cheque and cash machine withdrawals in the UK, standing orders and direct debits, Switch payments or monthly statements. For full written details of our services write to First Direct, Freepost, Leeds LS98 2RF. First Direct is a division of Midland Bank plc. First Direct reserves the right to decline to open an account for you. To maintain a quality service, calls may be monitored and/or recorded. Applicants must be 18 or over.
Member HSBC Group

24/UNIT TRUSTS

NEW! ON SALE NOW

Tap into real investment intelligence

Bloomberg MONEY

March issue on sale now
£2.95
At all leading newsagents

or call
01795 414936
(To order your subscription)

Foreign Exchange Rates

Country	Sterling Spot	1 month	3 month	Dollar Spot	1 month	3 month	D-Mark Spot
UK	1.0000			0.6073	0.6081	0.6099	0.3373
Australia	2.4735	2.4706	2.4645	1.5021	1.5024	1.5032	0.8342
Austria	20.847	20.814	20.745	12.660	12.658	12.653	7.0311
Belgium	61.201	61.033	60.622	37.165	37.115	36.975	20.641
Canada	2.3419	2.3371	2.3276	1.4222	1.4212	1.4197	0.7899
Denmark	11.302	11.271	11.203	6.8635	6.8539	6.8330	3.8120
ECU	1.5002	1.4965	1.4889	1.0977	1.0988	1.1012	0.8079
Finland	8.9987	8.9702	8.9111	5.4646	5.4549	5.4351	3.0350
France	9.939	8.909	9.845	6.0358	6.0259	6.0046	3.3523
Germany	2.9650	2.9560	2.9367	1.8005	1.7976	1.7912	1.0000
Greece	468.64	471.80	479.30	284.59	286.91	292.34	158.06
Hong Kong	12.756	12.747	12.772	7.7462	7.7517	7.7897	4.3022
Ireland	1.1920	1.1898	1.1883	1.3815	1.3821	1.3797	0.7673
Italy	2928.3	2923.2	2915.6	1777.0	1777.8	1778.3	986.95
Japan	211.10	209.99	207.59	128.20	127.70	126.52	71.200
Malaysia	6.2063	6.2025	6.2128	3.7689	3.7719	3.7894	2.0932
Mexico	14.146			8.5900			4.7709
Netherlands	3.3407	3.3302	3.3061	2.0286	2.0251	2.0177	1.1267
New Zealand	2.8570	2.8505	2.8368	0.5764	1.7335	1.7303	0.3201
Norway	12.391	12.354	12.280	7.5245	7.5129	7.4900	4.1791
Portugal	303.41	302.80	301.33	184.25	184.14	183.79	102.33
Saudi Arabia	6.1786	6.1740	6.1598	3.7520	3.7545	3.7570	2.0839
Singapore	2.8867	2.8830	2.8798	1.6315	1.6315	1.6345	0.9061
South Africa	8.1308	8.1745	8.2674	4.9375	4.9710	5.0425	2.7423
Spain	251.42	250.98	249.77	152.68	152.62	152.34	84.796
Sweden	13.206	13.178	13.117	8.0205	8.0140	8.0006	4.4546
Switzerland	2.3955	2.3833	2.3578	1.4547	1.4493	1.4381	0.8079
US	1.6467			1.0000			0.5554

Other Spot Rates

Country	Sterling	Dollar	Country	Sterling	Dollar
Argentina	1.6487	1.0000	Oman	0.6340	0.3850
Brazil	1.8592	1.1290	Pakistan	72.457	44.000
China	13.634	8.2791	Philippines	65.870	40.000
Czech Rep	55.606	33.767	Poland	5.8674	3.5630
Egypt	5.6108	3.4072	Qatar	5.9950	3.6405
Ghana	3780.1	2295.5	Russia	9985.9	6064.0
Hungary	341.31	207.26	South Korea	2722.1	1653.00
India	64.553	39.200	Taiwan	53.933	32.751
Indonesia	15726.5	9550.0	Thailand	72.251	43.875
Kuwait	0.5026	0.3052	Turkey	375146	227810
Nigeria	138.33	84.000	UAE	6.0477	3.6725

Interest Rates

UK		Germany		US		Japan	
Base	7.25%	Discount	2.50%	Prime	8.50%	Discount	0.50%
France		Lombard	4.50%	Discount	5.00%	Belgium	
Intervention	3.30%	Canada		Fed Funds	5.50%	Discount	2.75%
Italy		Prime	6.50%	Spain		Central	3.30%
Discount	5.50%	Discount	5.00%	10-d Repo	4.50%	Switzerland	
Netherlands		Denmark		Sweden		Discount	1.00%
SpAdvance	3.30%	Discount	3.50%	Repo(Ave)	4.35%	Lombard	2.75%

Bond Yields

Country	3 mth	chg	1 yr	chg	2 yr	chg	5 yr	chg	10 yr	chg
Australia	4.90	0.00	4.85	-0.02	5.09	0.00	5.45	0.00	5.83	0.02
Belgium	3.59	0.01	3.76	-0.01	4.10	0.02	4.48	0.03	5.07	0.02
Canada	4.56	0.01	5.04	-0.02	5.08	0.02	5.29	0.03	5.49	0.02
ECU	4.34	0.00	4.34	-0.01	4.25	-0.01	4.58	0.02	5.07	0.02
France	0.00	0.00	3.51	-0.01	3.97	0.03	4.42	0.03	5.00	0.01
Germany	3.50	0.00	3.75	0.00	3.88	0.05	4.51	0.02	4.96	0.01
Italy	5.95	0.07	5.21	0.05	4.86	0.05	4.93	0.02	5.33	0.02
Japan	0.48	0.00	0.52	-0.01	0.64	0.00	1.17	0.00	1.85	0.01
N'lands	3.45	-0.02	3.75	0.00	4.02	0.01	4.48	0.02	4.99	0.01
Spain	4.40	0.00	4.15	0.03	4.24	0.02	4.65	0.03	5.19	0.02
Sweden	4.00	0.00	4.60	0.00	4.81	0.18	5.10	-0.01	5.44	0.04
S'land	1.00	0.00	1.25	0.00	1.38	0.02	1.91	0.00	2.83	0.02
UK	7.00	0.00	7.52	0.01	6.70	0.05	6.28	0.04	6.03	0.04
US	5.14	0.05	5.13	0.06	5.54	0.10	5.62	0.10	5.65	0.09

Money Market Rates

	Overnight		1 week		1 month		3 months		6 months		1 year	
Treasury Bills					7.15	7.00	7.15	7.00				
LIBOR					7.41	7.47	7.41	7.47	7.44	7.50	7.41	7.47
Domestic Depos	7.25	7.38	7.31	7.38	7.41	7.47	7.44	7.50	7.44	7.50	7.44	7.50
Eurosterling Deps	7.31	7.44	7.31	7.44	7.26	7.20	7.27	7.21	7.28	7.22		
Eligible Bank Bills					7.43	7.37	7.46	7.38	7.46	7.38	7.42	7.34
Sterling CDs					5.55		5.58		5.82			
Eurodollar CDs					4.22	4.34	4.22	4.34	4.22	4.34		
ECU Deposits												

Liffe Financial Futures

Contract		Settlement	High	Low	Est floor volume	Open interest
Long Gilt	Mar-98	123.03	123.47	122.91	111123	149708
German Bund	Mar-98	107.51	107.81	107.37	188890	257610
US Long Bond	Mar-98	119.53	--	--		0
Italian Bond	Mar-98	118.28	118.61	118.16	57109	102653
Japan Govt Bd	Mar-98	130.27	130.39	130.27	3715	0
3 Mth Sterling	Mar-98	92.45	92.48	92.44	9150	120858
	Jun-98	92.54	92.56	92.53	13231	138615
3 Mth Euromark	Mar-98	96.48	96.49	96.47	23102	368853
	Jun-98	96.33	96.36	96.33	46360	400174
3 Mth Eurolira	Mar-98	94.01	94.04	94.00	27651	134249
	Jun-98	95.03	95.10	95.03	47258	214464
3 Mth Euroyen	Mar-98	98.90	98.91	98.91	50	0
3 Mth Euroswiss	Mar-98	98.92	98.94	98.88	7112	86140
	Jun-98	98.80	98.84	98.79	4079	64212
3 Mth ECU	Mar-98	95.89	95.70	95.68	742	8807
	Mar-98	95.75	95.76	95.74	648	7544
FTSE 100	Mar-98	5665.00	5665.00	5600.00	9284	60410

Liffe FTSE 100 Index Option

Settlement Price: 5651.00

Series	Mar Call	Imp Vol	Put	Imp Vol	Apr Call	Put	May Call	Put	Jun Call	Put
5600	142	20	95	21	219	154	270	190	337	232
5650	113	19	114	20	189	174	239	209	-1	-1
5700	87	19	139	20	159	196	209	230	272	270
5750	64	18	167	20	136	224	186	256	-1	-1

Commodity Indices

Goldman Sachs 5:30pm

	Base date	Last	Chg	%chg	31 Dec	%chgYTD
Index	1970=100	163.89	-0.49	-0.30	215.26	-23.86
Agricultural	1970=100	222.70	-2.44	-1.08	231.23	-3.69
Energy	1983=100	57.27	0.16	0.28	85.86	-33.30
Ind Metals	1977=100	145.87	0.00	0.00	168.79	-13.58
Livestock	1970=100	161.28	-1.15	-0.71	191.03	-15.57
Prec Metals	1973=100	396.01	-2.79	-0.70	463.54	-14.57

Energy

* prices at 5:30pm

Brent Crude ($/barrel) IPE	Close	Chg	Vol	Gas oil ($/tonne) IPE	Close	Chg	Vol	WTI Crude ($/barrel) NYM	Last	Chg	Products ($/tonne) Spot CIF NW Eur	
Apr	13.90	0.05	20087	Mar	131.75	-1.50	6813	Mar	16.15	0.00	Gasoline 95	164.00
May	14.32	0.02	7069	Apr	134.00	-2.00	5217	Apr	15.38	-0.01	Naphtha	151.00
Jun	14.68	-0.07	3955	May	137.00	-2.00	2245	May	15.76	-0.03	Gasoil	131.00
								Jun	16.12	-0.01	Fuel Oil (3.5%)	65.00

Industrial Metals

LME ($/tonne)	Cash		Chg	3 month		Chg	LME stocks	Chg
Aluminium HG	1421	1422	0.50	1439	1440	1	569250	-825
Aluminium Alloy	1253	1258	-5.00	1280	1281	-4	42620	-180
Copper A	1601	1602	-15.00	1628	1629	-14.5	377750	1350
Lead	506.5	507.5	2.00	521	522	2	107550	-125
Nickel	5210	5220	-115.00	5305	5310	-110	65304	30
Tin	5265	5275	0.00	5290	5295	-5	9965	-160
Zinc	1019.5	1020.5	6.00	1044	1045	6	477750	-750

Precious Metals

pm fix/$ per oz		Day's chg	Year's chg	pm fix/£ per oz		Day's chg	Year's chg	Coins ($)		Day's trade	Yr's chg
Platinum	374.00	-3.00	1.50	Platinum	226.75	-7.315	-2.20	Krugrands	291.65		-62.80
Palladium	236.00	2.00	97.00	Palladium	143.40	0.70	57.75	Sova	68.54		
Silver	6.39	-0.08	1.17	Silver	3.88	-0.07	0.68	Nobles	361.55		
Gold	291.40	-1.30	-61.65					Maple Leaf	305.65		-61.35

Agricultural

* at 5:30pm

Cocoa LIFFE	£/tonne	Coffee LIFFE	$/tonne	Barley LIFFE	£/tonne	Potatoes LIFFE	£/tonne	Lge Potatoes ATA	$/25k kg
Mar98	1014.00	Mar98	1765.00	Mar98	74.00	Mar98	70.00	Apr98	661.50
May98	1032.00	May98	1755.00	May98	76.00	Apr98	71.00	May98	663.00
Jul98	1054.00	Jul98	1738.00	Sep98	77.75	May98	84.00	Jun98	669.00
Vol:	11969	Vol:	11760	Vol:	100	Vol:	29	Vol:	55935
White Sugar* LIFFE	$/tonne	**Freight** LIFFE	$10/pt	**Wheat** LIFFE	$/tonne	**Corn*** CBOT	Cents/bshl	**Soya Beans*** CBOT	$/5k bshls
Mar98	272.00	Feb98	1039.00	Mar98	79.00	Mar98	264.25	Mar98	28.00
May98	264.00	Apr98	1150.00	May98	81.55	May98	272.00	May98	29.50
Aug98	271.00	Jul98	1010.00	Jul98	83.60	Jul98	277.50	Jul98	32.70
Vol:	4061	Vol:	44	Vol:	853	Vol:	54105	Vol:	98

100 Largest Insurance Funds

Fund	Bid	Offer	Fund	Bid	Offer
AXA E&L Balanced	1038.60	1093.30	Lincoln (Laur T) Mngd 3 Acc	742.70	781.60
AXA E&L Distribution	115.70	121.80	London & Manchester Flex Acc	615.50	615.50
AXA E&L Higher Inc	173.90	182.00	London Life Equity	1429.40	1429.40
AXA E&L UK Equity	163.50	171.40	London Life Mixed	844.30	844.30
Abbey Equity Ser 4	336.30	353.90	M & G Managed Bond Acc	1203.30	1266.60
Abbey International Ser 4	230.50	242.70	M & G Recovery Bond Acc	1159.80	1220.70
Abbey Managed Ser 4	304.60	320.30	Merchant Investors Managed	654.90	689.60
Abbey National Managed	171.60	180.70	Midland Balanced	120.40	126.80
Abbey National UK Equity	196.80	207.20	Midland UK Equity	159.80	168.00
Albany Equity Acc Ser 3	2334.90	2457.80	NPI Managed	689.00	725.20
Albany Mult Invest Acc Ser 3	1404.20	1478.10	NatWest Growth Managed	168.50	169.90
Allied Dunbar Distrib Bond	294.0	310.0	NatWest Security Managed	143.30	150.70
Allied Dunbar Gant Hi Inc S 2	2089.70	2199.70	NatWest UK Equity	186.50	193.30
Allied Dunbar Managed Acc	1570.30	1653.00	Norwich Managed ex-NUAM	2133.40	2246.70
Allied Dunbar Property Acc	757.00	796.80	Norwich Unitised Managed	203.20	213.96
Barclays Equity Acc	1408.40	1482.60	Norwich Unitised w/Profits	179.37	188.81
Barclays Internatl Acc	502.60	529.10	Pearl Equity Net	442.40	465.70
Barclays Managed Acc	762.10	802.30	Pearl Managed Net	348.60	364.90
Black Horse Income Ser 2	1197.23	1260.25	Prudential L Mgd Ser 2	1123.70	1182.90
Black Horse Mgd Inv Ser 2	682.44	718.36	Prudential Prolong Mgd	503.50	524.50
CU Managed	572.70	602.90	Royal Managed	558.40	584.80
CU UK Equity	793.50	835.30	Royal Scottish Growth	261.00	275.70
CU With Profit	147.0	154.80	Royal Scottish UK Equity	208.30	220.20
Canada Managed Ser 1-2	1004.70	1057.60	Scot Amicable Eq Ser 1	939.90	995.20
Cler Med Fid Equity	597.60	644.90	Scot Amicable Mngd Ser 1	640.20	673.90
Cler Med Fid Sapphire	407.50	429.00	Scot Equitable Mixed	372.20	387.70
Cler Med With Profits	117.50	117.50	Scot Life Managed	414.80	436.50
Confederation Equity Ser 1	2757.80	2902.90	Scot Mutual Balcty	314.90	331.50
Eagle Star Managed Ser 2	224.20	236.10	Scot Provident Int Blue Chip	263.40	277.40
Family Performance	182.0	198.00	Scot Provident Inst With Profs	144.30	151.70
Friends Prov Managed	450.30	474.00	Scot Widows International	593.30	624.60
Friends Prov UK Equity	658.40	694.20	Scot Widows Mixed	643.80	677.70
Friends Prov With Profits	224.70	236.60	Standard Equity	1724.70	1815.50
GA Prov Mutual Equity	1078.40	1240.40	Standard European	241.90	254.30
GA Prov Mutual Managed	677.80	713.50	Standard Far East	143.20	150.90
GA Unitised With Profits	171.60	180.60	Standard Life Fixed Interest	616.70	648.00
Gan Managed	399.70	420.80	Standard Managed	1024.00	1078.00
Guardian LLA Equity Acc	1558.30	1642.40	Sun Alliance Equity	1561.90	1643.30
Guardian LLA Intl Acc	808.70	851.30	Sun Alliance Managed	1071.20	1127.90
Guardian LLA Managed Acc	946.20	996.00	Sun Life Del Distrib Acc	248.50	262.70
Hill Samuel Equity	925.70	974.40	Sun Life Distrib Acc	364.50	383.70
Hill Samuel Managed Ser A	795.30	846.80	Sun Life Equity Acc	2389.00	2516.90
Irish Life Global Mgd Ser 1	795.30	846.80	Sun Life Managed Acc	1272.70	1339.70
JRothschild Net Managed	819.00	862.10	Sun Life/Canada Century Eq	184.40	184.40
Legal & General Eq Acc Ser 2	2114.0	2226.0	Sun Life/Canada Century Mgd	175.10	175.10
Legal & General Intl Ac Ser 2	1912.80	2013.80	Sun Life/Canada Equity Acc	371.60	397.80
Legal & General Managed Acc	671.20	707.0	Sun Life/Canada Mgd Acc	557.00	590.00
Lincoln (Laur I) Mngd Acc	1186.70	1248.20	TSB Equity	553.00	582.20
Lincoln (Laur I) UK Eq Acc	379.40	399.20	TSB Homebuyers	325.00	336.80
			TSB Managed	405.90	427.40

Care is taken to ensure that the information provided by Bloomberg and Financial Express for the Independent is correct, but neither warrant, represent or guarantee the contents of the information, nor do they accept any responsibility for errors, inaccuracies, omissions or any inconsistency herein.

FINANCIAL EXPRESS Bloomberg
www.bloomberg.com/uk

طبقا من الاصل

هكذا من الأصل

Racing libel case: QCs for both plaintiffs and defendants make their summing up speeches. **Greg Wood** reports

'Sordid, squalid, seedy, stains like the Swaffham must be scrubbed clean'

QC for The Sporting Life

Richard Hartley QC

THE SWAFFHAM Handicap at Newmarket in 1995 was yesterday described as a "sordid, squalid and seedy stain" on racing's integrity, as counsel made their closing addresses to the jury in the libel action brought by Jack Ramsden, his wife Lynda and Kieren Fallon, the champion jockey, against *The Sporting Life* newspaper.

The description formed part of the final rhetorical flourish of Richard Hartley QC, representing *The Sporting Life*. He insisted that Fallon had deliberately "pulled" Top Cees, the favourite, in the Swaffham, on the orders of Jack Ramsden, and that *The Life* had thus been justified in describing the Ramsdens as "cheats" following Top Cees' easy success in the Chester Cup three weeks later.

Hartley said the evidence given by Derek Thompson, a presenter with Channel 4 Racing, was "crucial". Thompson testified that Fallon had admitted to him, during a conversation in the Old Plough Inn near Newmarket a few hours after the Swaffham, that he had pulled Top Cees because Jack Ramsden had *ordered him to*.

"The idea that Mr Thompson came here willingly to lie to you is grotesque." Hartley told the jury. "He did not want to come. It may be suggested that he came here to save his career, but the very opposite is the truth. Mr Thompson came to the court in the certain knowledge that his evidence would harm his career. Mr Fallon admitted being in the inn and talking to Mr Thompson. We suggest that after at least three vodka and tonics, his tongue was loosened and he told the truth."

It was, Hartley said, a case of "Mr Fallon's word against Mr Thompson's". But could they, he asked, believe the jockey, who "agreed he has an appalling record at the Jockey Club," and had "admitted that he lied to the Jockey Club over his failure to turn up for a 'previous hearing." Why, he asked, had Milmo been so "desperate to discredit Mr Thompson with endless questions about his tipping line? Because he knows this *evidence is the key which unlocks the* door to what really happened in the paddock at Newmarket."

Hartley said the conviction of Tom Clarke, *The Sporting Life*'s editor, that the article was true "shone through his evidence". Further, he said, "you may ask whether anyone on the plaintiff's side expressed any real affection for the sport. Mr Ramsden clearly sees it merely as a betting medium."

The Ramsdens, he said, had "told so many lies and half-truths, and contradicted themselves so many times, that you may think Walter Scott had them in mind when he wrote: "Oh what a tangled web we weave, when once we practise to deceive." Hartley concluded by saying that "people love racing for all sorts of reasons, and they all want it to prosper, but it can only do so if its integrity stays intact and if sordid, squalid and seedy stains like the Swaffham are scrubbed clean."

'Thompson has been trapped by his own deceit. He is a name-dropper'

QC for Ramsdens and Kieren Fallon

Patrick Milmo QC

THE CENTREPIECE of the closing address by Patrick Milmo QC, *representing the Ramsdens* and *Fallon*, was an attack on the credibility of Derek Thompson's evidence.

"The starting point," Milmo said, "is that the scale of improbability of Derek Thompson's tale being true is quite monumental. What Kieren Fallon was doing, according to Mr Thompson, was confessing to a very serious breach of the rules by himself and by his employers, perhaps even amounting to criminal conduct. It could certainly ruin his career. Derek Thompson is not a friend or even an acquaintance, and he knew he was connected with the media. Surely he was the last person you would want to know if you had done something like that."

Milmo argued that Thompson "has been trapped by his own deceit". He said that this was "entirely in keeping with the character of the man. He is a name-dropper who likes people to think he is friendly with everyone. You can imagine him telling people the *next day* that *his good friend* Kieren Fallon had told him that he'd stopped Top Cees. He no doubt thought it the end of the matter, leaving his reputation as a man who knows everything slightly enhanced."

The libel action, however, presented Thompson with "an unwelcome choice. He either had to put his hands up and say to his colleagues, 'sorry, what I told you was untrue', or stick to his story whatever the consequences. He at least would be okay." The presenter, Milmo said, was "someone who practises deception, albeit of a minor kind, day by day".

Milmo said that the jury had not heard "from a single punter or ordinary racegoer", but rather "a succession of journalists and Channel 4 Racing team members, all assisting each other". The article, he said, was "an illustration of the power and arrogance of the press and related media. They decide the agenda, who is guilty and not guilty of misconduct, and we must accept it from them." The Ramsdens, Milmo said, had been "crucified by the media and *The Sporting Life*," and it was one of the jury's tasks "to see that this kind of abuse of power is not permitted."

Of the plaintiffs, he said: "You must ask yourselves if Lynda Ramsden came across as a conspirator in a murky and devious world of pulling horses." Jack Ramsden, he said, had been "an open and candid witness", who "did not shirk for a moment" from full disclosure of his gambling activities. Fallon, meanwhile, had made no attempt to "duck the issue" of his poor disciplinary record. "He is now the champion jockey, contracted to one of the country's most famous trainers, Henry Cecil. Do you think he would have reached those heights by pulling horses?"

It is a question which the jury will be asked to answer today.

General Wolfe doubtful for Grand National

GENERAL WOLFE, among the leading fancies for the Grand National at around 16-1 may miss the race. Tim Forster, his trainer, is awaiting the outcome of veterinary examinations on the Peter Marsh Chase winner.

Forster said yesterday: "General Wolfe has hanged a leg or something. The vets will be looking at him in the next few days. Normally when a horse has leg trouble they are not able to run for a while but I will have no idea whether he will run at Aintree for a few days."

RICHARD EDMONDSON
NAP: Inchdoney Boy (Folkestone 2.10)
NB: Kinda Groovy (Sedgefield 2.20)

Challenger Du Luc and Call It A Day were heavily backed yesterday for Saturday's Racing Post Chase and Greenalls Grand National Trial respectively.

Challenger Du Luc has been cut to 9-4 favourite with Coral, William Hill and Ladbrokes, from a top-priced 7-2 with Coral, while Call It A Day is now 5-1 favourite with William Hill and Ladbrokes after starting the day at 8-1. Super Tactics is 7-2 from 7-1 with William Hill for the Racing Post Chase, while Land Afar is 9-2 from 7-1.

Folkestone

HYPERION
2.10 Glowing Path · 2.40 Head For Heaven · 3.10 Native Player · 3.40 Country Tarquin · 4.10 Tea Cee Kay · 4.40 Designer Lines

GOING: Good (Good to Firm in places).
● Right-hand, undulating course with a run-in of one furlong.
● Course is 6m W of town off A20. Westenhanger station (service from London, Charing Cross) adjoins course. ADMISSION: £10 (under-16s free). CAR PARK: Picnic Park £4 per car, £4 per occupant, remainder Free.
● LEADING TRAINERS: J Gifford 17-75 (22.7%), D Grissell 11-68 (16.2%), N Henderson 8-26 (30.8%), R Rowe 7-63 (11.1%), M Pipe 6-36 (16.7%), M J Roberts 4-12 (33.3%).
● LEADING JOCKEYS: M A Fitzgerald 10-48 (20.8%), R Dunwoody 10-55 (18.2%), N Williamson 8-47 (17%), A P McCoy 7-44 (15.9%), B Fenton 6-29 (20.7%).
● FAVOURITES: 105-252 (41.7%).
BLINKERED FIRST TIME: Verde Luna (2.40), Brackenheath (3.10), Cheeky Charlie (3.40), Country Tarquin (3.40), Hanbitooh (4.40), Fighting Times (visored) (4.40).

2.10 STANFORD SELLING HANDICAP HURDLE (CLASS G) £2,000 added 2m 1f 110yds Penalty Value £1,772

1 54C11P HEVER GOLF DIAMOND (18) (BF) (Classic Syndicate) J R Best 5 12 0 ... L Cummins (5) B
2 053U01 GLOWING PATH (9) (D) (P Slade) R Hodges 8 11 11 ... R Dunwoody
3 020-0 RUTH'S GAMBLE (F13) (D) (Mrs A Emanuel) Mrs L Jewell 10 11 1 ... Mr Edgar Byrne (7) V
4 0-02P6 SEXTON'S MIRROR (98) (BF) (Mervyn J Evans) T M Jones 6 11 0 ... N Williamson B
5 UP-033 ZESTI (5) (Mrs J Lewis) P Howling 8 10 13 ... J R Kavanagh
6 -604DP DESERT CHALLENGER (27) (Andrews Freight Services Ltd) J Jenkins 8 10 12 ... S Fox V
7 00-00P MAZIRAH (28) (Michael Appleby) R Curtis 7 10 11 ... Mr M Appleby
8 426-53 BLURRED IMAGE (6) (Rivoli Holdings) J C Poulton 7 10 9 ... J Culloty
9 5P10/P WILTOSKI (9) (R R Ledger) R Ledger 10 10 8 ... Mrs N Ledger B
10 /P4005 KREEF (16) (H J S Racing) R Curtis 6 10 8 ... J Leech
11 6-P0 RESERVATION ROCK (13) (Peter Taller) R Simpson 7 10 7 ... O Gallagher
12 5P2662 MEGA TID (19) (Come Racing Ltd) J Poulton 8 10 7 ... J Magee (3)
13 0000 HALMANERROR (29) (Cauliheads Racing) G McCourt 8 10 8 ... D J Moffatt
14 00U633 INCHYDONEY BOY (71) (Mrs J Irvine) Miss Z Davison 9 10 5 ... A Irvine (7)
15 006-60 CELTIC LILLEY (69) (Mrs J E Taylor) R Hoad 8 10 2 ... B Fenton
16 -05P00 BIGWIG (19) (Mrs Elizabeth Kiernan) G L Moore 5 10 1 ... R Johnson B
17 P040R6 ALBERT THE LION (9) (J Neville) J Neville 6 10 0 ... Mr S Durack (5)
18 00P DRAGON'S BACK (35) (Mrs J Scudder) D O'Brien 5 10 0 ... W Marston
19 -PPU04 WEEKEND WORKER (9) (V Y Gethin) T Keddy 7 10 0 ... G Upton B
20 0/PP-P GENTLE TUNE (39) (H J Jarvis) J R Best 8 10 0 ... Michael Brennan (3)
– 20 declared –

Minimum weight: 10st. True handicap weights: Weekend Worker 9st 12lb, Gentle Tune 9st 10lb
BETTING: 5-1 Glowing Path, 7-1 Halmanerror, 6-1 Mega Tid, 9-1 Blurred Image, 16-1 Hever Golf Diamond, Kreef, Zesti, 14-1 Inchydoney Boy, Reservation Rock, Sexton's Mirror, 16-1 Bigwig, Celtic Lilley, Ruth's Gamble, 20-1 others
1997. Killing Time 8 10 10 D J Burchell 14-1 (D Burchell) 10 ran

FORM GUIDE
BIGWIG is 9lb lower than when beaten eight lengths into fifth by Snowy Petrel in a novices' handicap on good ground at Windsor in November. Sextons Mirror, has not shown much since a Fontwell second to Weather Wise (handicap non-seller) on his first run since coming from Ireland, while Hever Golf Diamond was a big disappointment at Lingfield last time when pulled up before two out in the race won by The Executor from Mega Tid. Hever Golf Diamond had Mega Tid three and a half lengths back when taking a Market Rasen seller in November and possibly found the ground too testing at Lingfield. Mazirah can take a strong hold and has not shown his best form for a while, but he has a chance on his pre-Christmas form last jumps season as well as a running-on fourth to Arli in a 12-furlong handicap here last summer. Selection: BIGWIG

2.40 'GAY RECORD' CHALLENGE TROPHY HANDICAP CHASE (CLASS F) £3,250 added 2m Penalty Value £2,691

1 P23543 COURT MASTER (4) (D) (Mrs Timothy Lewis) R Buckler 10 11 10 ... B Powell
2 F2/622 HEAD FOR HEAVEN (9) (C O'Connell) R Hoad 8 11 7 ... B Fenton
3 1662F1 GRATOMI (9) (John Pearl) P Ritchens 8 11 0 (7ex) ... S Fox
4 3/2U4FU SHERWOOD BOY (34) (D) (Peter Granger) K Bailey 9 11 4 ... N Williamson
5 505340 VERDE LUNA (9) (Ms Isabella Ziemba) R Smith 0 11 3 ... C Maude B
6 -00004 FICHU (USA) (9) (D) (B Seal & The Sioux Partnership) Mrs I Richards 10 11 2 ... M Richards
7 0/24-2 FRANK KNOWS (34) (Mrs C M Peacock) T George 8 10 12 ... R Johnson
8 UP-1PU MYSTIC COURT (67) (D) (Court Jesters Partnership 3) A Turnell 7 10 8 ... C Rae (7)
8 6-461£ PEGMARINE (USA) (27) (CD) (Mrs Ann Woodrow) Mrs A Woodrow 15 10 8 ... J A McCarthy
10 000-F3 SCOBIE GIRL (18) (Ian M McGready) J Mullins 8 10 0 ... A Bates (5)
11 254P0- UPWARD SURGE (275) (D) (R R Ledger) R Ledger 8 10 0 ... Mrs N Ledger
– 11 declared –

Minimum weight: 10st. True handicap weight: Upward Surge 9st 12lb
BETTING: 2-1 Gratomi, 7-2 Frank Knows, 6-1 Court Master, 8-1 Head For Heaven, 6-1 Mystic Court, 10-1 Sherwood Boy, 12-1 Verde Luna, Scobie Girl, 14-1 Fichu, 16-1 Pegmarine, 33-1 Upward Surge
1997. Buckland Lad 6 11 2 B Fenton 15-8 fav (D Grissell) 7 ran

FORM GUIDE
GRATOMI held an eight-length lead and was looking an assured winner when he fell two out at Lingfield in December and has since made amends at Hereford – beating Winnow three lengths. Gratomi was turning in a much improved display when second to Mr Strong Gale (two wins since) at Ludlow three outings back and, although a 7lb penalty makes life tougher, this looks another soft race. Sherwood Boy could go close with a clear round, but his jumping is a cause for concern. Another with jumping problems is Mystic Court, who won a low-grade novices' handicap hurdle at Towcester in November and is coming back from a 67-day absence since unseating in the Lingfield event in which Gratomi was an unlucky loser. Court Master has won once from 32 starts and has top weight, which is proof that this is not a strong event. Selection: GRATOMI

3.10 LYMPNE NOVICE HURDLE (CLASS E) £2,900 added 2m 6f 110yds Penalty Value £2,732

1 0-F142 BRACKENHEATH (37) (BF) (John Grist) D Gressel 7 11 10 ... N Williamson B
2 4141-2 NATIVE PLAYER (18) (BF) (Nicholas Cooper) R Rowe 5 11 10 ... R Dunwoody
3 261-F4 FILSCOT (15) (J Wild) C Morlock 8 11 4 ... 10 Gallagher
4 2 FOURDANED (26) (J Falvey & Mr G Williamson) S Dow 5 11 4 ... J R Kavanagh
5 0-006 HIGH IN THE SKY (96) (S Powell) J Jenkins 5 11 4 ... P Hide
0 2-5 LOOKS LIKE TROUBLE (15) (M & 10 Worcester) N Chance 6 11 4 ... Mr S Durack (5)
7 23- MILNGAVIE (F7) (Mrs Lisa Olley) B McMath 8 11 4 ... T Kent
8 4 MULDOVA (67) (D Curtis) D Gressel 5 11 4 ... B Fenton
8 TRACE ELEMENT (A J Mason) J De Giles 7 10 13 ... Mr R Wakley (3)
10 4 CHIEF PREDATOR (USA) (20) (Pine Crest Racing) D Williams 4 10 7 ... R Massey (3)
– 10 declared –

BETTING: 13-8 Native Player, 5-2 Brackenheath, 5-1 Filscot, 6-1 Fourdaned, 12-1 Looks Like Trouble, 14-1 Chief Predator, 16-1 Milngavie, Muldova, 20-1 others
1997. Rare Spread 7 11 12 A P McCoy 9-4 fav (M Pipe) 14 ran

FORM GUIDE
The form of the Grade Two event won by Song Of The Sword at Sandown in December has taken a few knocks and although Brackenheath stayed on well at the end, he found Bright Flame too good at Fontwell next time. The soft ground made that race a stamina slog, which is what Brackenheath appears to need, so there must be a chance he will be outpaced by NATIVE PLAYER, who won a bumper and maiden hurdle for Aidan O'Brien in Ireland last season. It would be all too easy to get carried away with the fact that Red Curate, who had 10 lengths to spare over Native Player at Fontwell 16 days ago, has since won the valuable Persian War Hurdle at Chepstow, but Native Player does shape as if the extra half a mile will suit. Filscot, out of a winning pointer, should also like the extra distance after a running-on fourth to Arkley Royal at Warwick over an extended two and a half miles. Selection: NATIVE PLAYER

3.40 DES DOHERTY (80) HANDICAP HURDLE (CLASS E) £2,900 added 2m 6f 110yds Penalty Value £2,427

1 025205 JOVIAL MAN (14) (D) (Mrs Barbara Marchant) R O'Sullivan 8 11 10 ... M A Fitzgerald
2 211400 AINSI SOIT IL (FR) (14) (CD) (A-Men Partnership) G McCourt 7 11 5 ... W Marston B
3 4-61PP CHEEKY CHARLIE (9) (CD) (Phil Collins) G L Moore 0 11 5 ... M Batchelor (7) B
4 U41232 MILLMOUNT (14) (CD) (Tommy Breen) T McGovern 8 11 3 ... R Johnson B
5 1-2221 CARACOL (16) (C) (C G Bolton) J Neville 3 11 2 ... Mr S Durack (5)
6 44-053 HAWTHORNE GLEN (7) (C) (Mrs O C Foster) J Long 11 11 1 ... B Fenton
7 40-555 PETTAUGH (40) (CD) (G A Hubbard) G Hubbard 10 11 1 ... C Honour (7)
8 -22062 COUNTRY TARQUIN (9) (D) (Miss C A James) R Hodges 0 10 10 ... R Dunwoody B
9 03-604 SALAMAN (FR) (9) (BF) (Mrs V O'Brien) D O'Brien 8 10 8 ... P Hide
10 15P600 COPPER COIL (27) (D) (R A Lloyd) R Buckler 8 10 6 ... B Powell
11 40UP60 SMUGGLER'S POINT (USA) (14) (D) (Mrs V R Hoare) J Bridger 8 10 5 ... A Maguire B
12 U-0020 MINGUS (USA) (7) (C E Grover) R Buckler 11 10 0 ... Mr 10 Baines (7)
13 /55-P0 EMALLEN (13) (Peter J Allen) Mrs L Jewell 10 10 0 ... J R Kavanagh
– 13 declared –

Minimum weight: 10st. True handicap weights: Mingus 9st 5lb, Emallen 9st 8lb.
BETTING: 5-2 Millmount, 9-2 Country Tarquin, 6-1 Caracol, 7-1 Salaman, 9-1 Ainsi Soit Il, 10-1 Jovial Man, Pettaugh, 12-1 Hawthorne Glen, 14-1 Cheeky Charlie, 16-1 Copper Coil, Smuggler's Point, 20-1 others
1997. Millmount 7 10 13 D Bridgwater 5-1 (T McGovern) 8 ran

FORM GUIDE
MILLMOUNT is 4lb higher than when caught by Pealings in a 16-runner conditional jockeys' handicap at Ascot two weeks ago, but meets some exposed handicappers on a course which suits her – her two previous wins have been gained here over this distance. The Ascot form was nothing special, but the first four pulled 12 lengths clear and Millmount stays well. She unseated her rider at the first in the Windsor handicap won by Ivor's Flutter, but cannot be blamed for that because she was bumped by another horse. Fifth of 14 in that race was Jovial Man, who had previously run Smith Too to a neck over 3m at Kempton. He runs here off a 4lb higher mark and has top weight for his trouble. Caracol is up 5lb for his narrow defeat of Come On Penny over a shorter trip at Fontwell and looks vulnerable this time, because his two wins last season resulted in a 16lb elevation in the handicap. Country Tarquin, second to Maryjo at Plumpton, can reach the frame, while Pettaugh is held by Millmount on their running behind Tompetoo at Kempton (3m), but pulled too hard that day. Selection: MILLMOUNT

4.10 TENTERDEN MAIDEN HUNTER CHASE (CLASS H) £1,350 added 2m 5f Penalty Value £1,067

1 0005-3 BATHWICK BOBBIE (P18) (Dr J R J Naylor) Mrs S Elphick 11 12 8 ... Dr J Naylor (7)
2 P/12P- ELMORE (319) (Mike Roberts) M J Roberts 11 12 8 ... Mr P Hacking (3)
3 42-06U PEARL DANTE (12) (Miss S Cotterill) Mrs S Mullins 8 12 8 ... Col R Webb-Bowen (7)
4 352P-1 RAINCHECK (P17) (Mrs Georgina Worsley) Mrs G Worsley 7 12 8 ... Mr C Gordon (7)
0 0U22/U RED RORY (P45) (Mrs D H McCarthy) Mrs D McCarthy 8 12 8 ... Mr T McCarthy (5)
6 45/U55 ROYAL RUPERT (P10) (Mrs J Fidden-Green) R Parker 11 12 8 ... Mr R Chelton (7)
7 2/P0-1 SOUND STATEMENT (P17) (T R Hills) T Hills 9 12 8 ... Mr T Hills (7)
8 1243/1 SPARKLING BLAKE (P11) (Andrew Hickman) Mrs S Hickman 12 12 8 ... Mr A Hickman (7)
8 5/2P- TARRAGON (275) (N Munday) J Homewood 8 12 8 ... Mr G Baines (7)
10 122-21 TEA CEE KAY (P10) (C O King) C King 8 12 8 ... Mr A Sansome (5)
11 /P14-F TOMCAPPAGH (7) (Mrs S Wall) S Wall 7 12 8 ... Mr A Warr (7)
12 113-31 POLAR ANA (P10) (Mrs P A McIntyre) Mrs G Gladders 8 12 3 ... Miss S Gladders (7)
– 12 declared –

BETTING: 9-4 Tea Cee Kay, 11-4 Elmore, 7-2 Sound Statement, 13-2 Sparkling Blake, 6-1 Raincheck, 12-1 Polar Ana, 14-1 Red Rory, 16-1 Pearl Dante, Tarragon, 20-1 Bathwick Bobbie, 25-1 Tomcappagh, 33-1 Royal Rupert
1997. Trifast Lad 12 12 5 Mr P Hacking (3) 11-10 fav (M J Roberts) 10 ran

FORM GUIDE
ELMORE, lightly raced, has won first time out for the past two seasons and can repeat the feat today. He impressed when scoring at Higham on his first run last season, recording a good time in the process, but was beaten 11 lengths by Copper Thistle when joint-favourite for a similar event to this at Leicester next time and was pulled up on his final start at Ascot. The fast ground is in Elmore's favour and he can begin to make up for lost time. Tea Cee Kay also goes well on fast ground and is in good form, following a Barbury Castle second to Precarium (winner again since) last month with victory at Tweseldown. He finished three lengths in front of Copper Thistle (getting 7lb) at Towcester last season, which gives him an edge over Elmore, but the selection is expected to prove that Leicester running wrong. Sound Statement made a winning return to pointing at Cottenham this month and rates best of the others. Sparkling Blake scored in an open at Higham on his return from a lengthy lay-off after injury this month and can again go well, but Polar Ana won only a poor race at Charing last time, while this will be much tougher than the maiden that Raincheck landed at Cottenham. Selection: ELMORE

4.40 DAVID BENGE NOVICE HANDICAP HURDLE (CLASS F) £2,400 added 2m 1f 110yds Penalty Value £2,136

1 04-UPF BARTON SCAMP (91) (Mrs B W Palmer) D Williams 8 11 10 ... Mr Edgar Byrne (7)
2 603-4 DAYDREAMER (USA) (30) (Mrs Rita Bates) G L Moore 5 11 7 ... R Johnson
3 5864 ELA-YIE-MOU (72) (Hatfield Limited) S Dow 5 11 4 ... A Maguire
4 404-56 HANBITOOH (USA) (108) (Fred Cotton) Mrs A Perrett 5 11 8 ... C Maude B
5 P-4200 GOLD LANCE (USA) (16) (Mrs Barbara Marchant) R O'Sullivan 5 11 3 ... M A Fitzgerald
6 -P0PP1 FUNNY GENIE (FR) (9) (D) (Mrs L C Taylor) Mrs L Taylor 5 11 1 (7ex) ... R Bellamy V
7 4/3050 DARK ROMANCE (19) (A A Goldson) Miss Z Davison 8 10 11 ... A Irvine (7)
8 006 DESIGNER LINES (65) (R A Shaw) E L James 5 10 7 ... J R Kavanagh
8 0601 FIGHTING TIMES (6) (D) (Julian Graves Ltd) C Smith 8 10 7 (7ex) ... V Slattery V
10 0-PP RIVER MONARCH (83) (B J Whee) R Rowe 7 10 8 ... A Garrity (7)
11 5P60 SANWOOD (19) (M R Pascall) J Bridger 5 10 3 ... M Batchelor (7)
12 1P-6PP MANKIND (214) (J A T de Giles) J De Giles 7 10 3 ... Mr S Durack (5)
13 0-5P63 LIME STREET BLUES (12) (The Blues Partnership) T Keddy 7 10 2 ... N Williamson
14 P00 LEAD STORY (65) (M C Banks) M Banks 5 10 1 ... I Lawrence
15 22560P MOONLIGHT ESCAPADE (12) (D) (P Slade) R Hodges 7 10 0 ... P Holley
16 06P5/5 COMPUTERAID LADY (118) (M O'Brien) R Curtis 0 10 0 ... J Leech
17 /00-FP ERMYNS PET (28) (J Daniels) D Morris 7 10 0 ... B Powell
18 000-P0 JUST JIM (61) (V Y Gethin) T Keddy 8 10 0 ... J Goldstein (7)
19 0PP-6 PRUSSIAN EAGLE (146) (Quicksilver Racing Partnership) K Bailey 8 10 0 ... W Walsh (7)
– 19 declared –

Minimum weight: 10st. True handicap weights: Moonlight Escapade 9st 12lb, Computeraid Lady 9st 10lb, Ermyns Pet 9st 5lb, Just Jim 9st 2lb, Prussian Eagle 8st 13lb.
BETTING: 11-2 Fighting Times, 13-2 Funny Genie, 7-1 Gold Lance, 6-1 Dark Romance, 8-1 Ela-Yie-Mou, Hanbitooh, 10-1 Daydreamer, 12-1 Lime Street Blues, 14-1 Barton Scamp, 16-1 Designer Lines, 20-1 others
1997. Museum 6 11 1 X Aizpuru (7) 8-1 (P Winkworth) 12 ran

FORM GUIDE
Hanbitooh, who began life with Ed Dunlop, has few miles on the clock, but does look slow. Still, there is sure to be a decent pace on and Hanbitooh is the type to go well fresh. He has dropped a few pounds and should figure. FUNNY GENIE had acquired a sequence of uninspiring form figures before making most and coming home four lengths clear of Dovetto in a Hereford handicap nine days ago, but had previously run well for a long way in a Doncaster three-miler won by Unsinkable Boxer. Connections must have had some faith in Funny Genie to run him in a Grade Two novices' hurdle at Ascot before Christmas, so now that he has clicked once, he might do so again. Dark Romance has shown enough to suggest she is worth noting, while Ela-Yie-Mou can do better than most and Fighting Times has a chance in this better race after taking a Taunton seller. Looks Like Trouble will make a nice chaser in the long term and has been second in a maiden point-to-point in Ireland. Selection: FUNNY GENIE

Sedgefield

HYPERION
2.20 Pontevedra 2.50 Fatehalkhair 3.20 Swing Quartet 3.50 Titan Thai 4.20 Jack The Td 4.50 Bahamian Knight

GOING: Good to Firm.
●Left-hand, undulating course. Easy fences and long run-in on chase course of 500yds.
●Course is 1m SE of town near junction of A689 and A177. Bus service from Stockton station (8m) or Durham station (12m). ADMISSION: Paddock £8 (OAPs £4); Course £2. CAR PARK: Paddock £2, rest free.
●LEADING TRAINERS: Mrs M Reveley 70-239 (29.3%), J H Johnson 20-170 (11.8%), J Wade 15-169 (8.9%), P Beaumont 14-76 (18.4%).
●LEADING JOCKEYS: P Niven 53-176 (30.1%), L Wyer 22-110 (20%), A Dobbin 15-148 (10.1%), J Supple 14-76 (18.4%).
●FAVOURITES: 230-594 (38.7%).
BLINKERED FIRST TIME: Meg's Memory (visored) (2.50), Bahamian Knight (4.50).

2.20 STANLEY RACING HANDICAP HURDLE (CLASS E) £3,000 added 3m 3f 110yds

1 F3P52F EVER SMILE (FR) (14) M Pipe 11 12 0 ... A P McCoy B
2 -5146 KINDA GROOVY (16) (CD) I Park 9 10 8 ... N Smith B
3 403-66 MASTER OF THE ROCK (15) (C) J Mackie 8 10 8 ... E Husband (3) V
4 460451 PONTEVEDRA (6) (C) K Morgan 5 10 3 (5ex) C McCormack (5) B
5 244-RP NORTHERN STAR (61) Miss J Wormall 7 10 0 Miss J Wormall (7)
6 6-0252 DENTICULATA (15) (C) P Spottiswood 10 10 0 ... S Taylor (3)
7 P0-000 KIR (22) (CD) V Thompson 10 10 0 ... R Wilkinson (5)
– 7 declared –

BETTING: 6-4 Ever Smile, 11-4 Pontevedra, 100-30 Kinda Groovy, 5-1 Denticulata, 14-1 Northern Star, 16-1 Master Of The Rock, 50-1 Kir

2.50 HARRY LANE MEMORIAL HANDICAP HURDLE (CLASS E) £4,000 added 2m 1f

1 1134F1 FATEHALKHAIR (8) (CD) B Ellison 6 12 3 (7ex) C McCormack (5)
2 13/2-5 BRACKENTHWAITE (6) A J Lockwood 8 11 2 ... Miss A Deniel
3 232131 BERYLLIUM (8) M Pipe 4 11 0 (7ex) ... A P McCoy
4 5/0214 GEORGE DILLINGHAM (22) (BF) D Smith 8 10 11 A Thornton
5 45-456 MEG'S MEMORY (11) A Streeter 5 10 7 ... T Eley V
6 PP012/ BROAD OUTLOOK (799) M Smith 8 10 6 ... J Supple
7 54-55P PRIDDY FAIR (F26) D Barker 5 10 0 ... E Husband (3)
– 7 declared –

BETTING: Evens Beryllium, 9-4 Fatehalkhair, 6-1 George Dillingham, 10-1 Meg's Memory, 16-1 Brackenthwaite, 25-1 Priddy Fair, 33-1 Broad Outlook

3.20 EBF TATTERSALLS (IRELAND) NOVICE CHASE (QUALIFIER) (CLASS D) £5,000 added mares 2m 5f

1 -P6821 SWING QUARTET (6) N Twiston-Davies 8 11 3 ... C Llewellyn
2 B2126- WHAT CHANCE (270) (D) Mrs H Mobley 10 11 0 Mr O McPhail (5)
3 44F004 FINER FEELINGS (58) Mrs D Thomson 8 10 10 ... B Storey
4 -5F4FP GAME POINT (8) D Lamb 8 10 10 ... J Burke
5 P40P13 KRALINGEN (33) N Chamberlain 8 10 10 ... C McCormack (5)
6 U5P-4 LAKELAND EDITION (11) Mrs A Naughton 7 10 10 ... J Supple
7 -324PF OWENS QUEST (33) (D) T Etherington 8 10 10 ... L Wyer
8 P/5-00 THE EARLY BIRD (16) P Monteith 7 10 10 ... A Dobbin
– 8 declared –

BETTING: 2-5 Swing Quartet, 4-1 What Chance, 8-1 Owen's Quest, 12-1 Kralingen, 16-1 Finer Feelings, 33-1 others

3.50 ALAN MERRIGAN MEMORIAL H'CAP CHASE (CLASS D) £5,000 added 2m 5f

1 523321 CROSS CANNON (114) (CD) J Wade 12 11 10 ... A Dobbin
2 0/1P1 TITAN THAI (11) (D) N Mason 9 11 1 ... R Guest
3 -14263 VAL DE RAMA (8) (CD) D Smith 8 10 11 ... A Thornton
4 56/0P5 ZAMHAREER (USA) (22) W Storey 7 10 6 ... P Carberry
5 F3-P5P CROWDED HOUSE (11) B Ellison 10 10 5 C McCormack (5) V
– 5 declared –

BETTING: 6-4 Val De Rama, 9-4 Titan Thai, 5-2 Cross Cannon, 10-1 Zamhareer, 33-1 Crowded House

4.20 SOUTH DURHAM MAIDEN HUNTER CHASE (CLASS H) £2,000 added 2m 5f

1 313-56 ADMISSION (10) Mrs B H-Harker 8 12 0 ... Miss L Horner (7)
2 2/00P- AR AGHAIDH ABHAILE (441) K Milligan 7 12 0 Miss P Robson (5)
3 5FFPP- CHILDSWAY (274) S J Robinson 10 12 0 ... Mr S Robinson (7)
4 432P-0 DALAMETRE (14) M Evans 11 12 0 ... Mr M Munrowd (7)
5 D440U5 EARL GRAY (137) Mrs A Lockwood 11 12 0 ... Miss A Deniel (7) B
6 P11-21 HAL'S PRINCE (18) T L Jones 11 12 0 ... Mr G Lewis (7)
7 UF-P10 JACK THE TD (13) J Cornwall 9 12 0 ... Mr J R Cornwall (7)
8 1- JUST A KING (326) Mrs C Blatsborough 7 12 0 ... Mr S Swiers
8 4/P-P4 MOON CASTLE (18) V Thompson 10 12 0 Mr M Thompson (3)
10 6F46-P PERSIAN LION (10) Mrs L Ward 8 12 0 ... Miss T Jackson (7)
11 23/U-P PRIVATE JET (10) I A Brown 8 12 0 ... Mr G Markham (7)
12 FPU42- ROYAL BANKER (275) A Dickman 8 12 0 ... Mr A Parker (7)
13 45B-U4 BAMBOO PIE (10) Ian Emmerson 8 11 8 ... Mr T J Barry (7)
14 22-623 COOLVAWN LADY (4) W Halliday 8 11 8 ... Mr B R Foster (7)
15 URP-00 LA MAJA (10) N Wilson 9 11 9 ... Mr N Wilson (5)
– 15 declared –

BETTING: 8-11 Coolvawn Lady, 9-2 Hal's Prince, 13-2 Just A King, 16-1 Dalametre, 12-1 Admission, Royal Banker, 16-1 Jack The TD, 33-1 others

4.50 STANLEY RACING NOVICE HURDLE (CLASS E) £3,000 added 2m 1f

1 0-5F ANGRY NATIVE (78) J Wade 8 11 4 ... K Johnson
2 22 BAHAMIAN KNIGHT (CAN) (11) M Pipe 5 11 4 ... A P McCoy B
3 CITTERN (F165) Miss L Russell 8 11 4 ... D Reid (7)
4 P-0000 DARK MIDNIGHT (11) D Lamb 8 11 4 ... J Burke B
5 033P DOCTOR BRAVIOUS (11) B Ellison 5 11 4 ... E Callaghan
6 6-0 HAPPY BLAKE (20) Mrs J Storey 7 11 4 ... D Parker
7 00 LUCKY MOVE (15) S Kettlewell 5 11 4 ... Mr C Bonner (3)
8 2-5842 MELTEMISON (13) M Hammond 5 11 4 ... R Garritty
8 4/0-40 MY BUSTER (64) Miss K Milligan 0 11 4 ... P Carberry
10 060 ROI DE LA CHASSE (19) C Grant 5 11 4 ... B Storey
11 26000 SANDABAR (40) J Howard Johnson 5 11 4 ... A Dobbin
12 05 HELM WIND (25) M Barnes 5 10 13 ... S Taylor (3)
13 F6 DR WOODSTOCK (11) W Storey 4 10 0 ... R McGrath (3)
– 13 declared –

BETTING: 1-4 Bahamian Knight, 7-1 Meltemison, 12-1 Cittern, 14-1 Dr Bravious, 16-1 My Buster, Sandabar, 20-1 Roi De La Chasse, 25-1 Dr Woodstick, Helm Wind, 33-1 others

Wolverhampton

HYPERION
2.00 Feym 2.30 Italian Symphony (nb) 3.00 GREENSPAN (nap) 3.30 Brutal Fantasy 4.00 Mustn't Grumble 4.30 Prince Ashleigh

GOING: Standard (All-weather track).
STALLS: 7f – outside; rest – inside.
DRAW ADVANTAGE: High from 6f to 1m 4f.
●Fibresand, left-hand, oval course.
●Course is N of town on A449. Wolverhampton station 1m. ADMISSION: Club £15; Tattersalls £6 (OAP members of Diamond Club £4); Viewing Restaurant £25.90 including entrance and meal. CAR PARK: free
●LEADING TRAINERS: R Hollinshead 64-617 (10.4%), M Johnston 56-255 (22%), P Haslam 38-209 (18.2%), P Evans 32-332 (9.6%).
●LEADING JOCKEYS: S Sanders 40-338 (11.8%), 10 Holland 27-139 (19.4%), Dean McKeown 27-251 (10.8%), A Clark 24-216 (11.1%).
●FAVOURITES: 394-1217 (32.4%).
BLINKERED FIRST TIME: Night City (3.00), Brutal Fantasy (visored) (3.30), Operatic (visored) (4.00), Double-O (3.30), Burning Cost (4.00).

2.00 GROUSE MAIDEN STAKES (CLASS D) £5,500 added 7f

1 05-334 FAYM (2) J Wharton 4 9 7 ... 10 Sweeney (3) 8 B
2 GARAJ J O'Shea 3 8 9 ... P Doe (5) 8
3 0- IMPERIAL COURT (205) J O'Shea 3 8 6 ... Dean McKeown 7
4 -00000 KANTONE (2) P Evans 8 8 8 ... A McCarthy (5) 0 V
5 336-22 STRIDING KING (5) (BF) M Channon 3 8 9 ... A Mackay 4
6 64- FEAR NOT (158) M Bell 3 8 4 ... M Fenton 2
7 4 LADY JAZZ (11) T J Naughton 3 8 4 ... R French 3
0 0 SMART (12) Sir M Prescott 3 8 4 ... S Sanders 1
9 00200- SUPACALIFRAGILISTK (113) J Balding 5 8 4 ... J Edmunds 8
– 8 declared –

BETTING: 2-1 Striding King, 9-4 Faym, 100-30 Fear Not, 6-1 Smart, Supercalifragilistik, 12-1 Lady Jazz, 25-1 others

2.30 PARTRIDGE CLAIMING STAKES (CLASS F) £3,000 added 7f

1 0-055 ZIGGY'S DANCER (7) (CD) E Alston 7 8 4 ... C Lowther (3) 1
2 12001/ ORTOLAN (606) (D) J L Eyre 5 8 13 ... R Lappin 4
3 6-213 ITALIAN SYMPHONY (4) (C) (D) (BF) P Evans 4 8 12 ... A McCarthy (5) 5 V
4 00101 KINGCHIP BOY (6) (D) M Ryan 9 8 11 ... P McCabe (3) 3
5 3-1D14 ELITE HOPE (18) (CD) (BF) N Tinkler 8 8 8 Dean McKeown 0
6 25-061 U-NO-HARRY (12) (D) R Hollinshead 5 8 8 ... W Ryan 2
– 6 declared –

BETTING: 9-4 Ziggy's Dancer, 5-2 Kingchip Boy, 100-30 Italian Symphony, 4-1 Elite Hope, 10-1 Ortolan, 20-1 U-No-Harry

3.00 WOODCOCK HANDICAP (CLASS C) £12,000 added 1m 4f

1 /4-511 THREADNEEDLE (5) K Burke 5 10 1 (6ex) ... 3
2 -33131 NIGHT CITY (9) (D) K Burke 7 8 12 (6ex) ... D Sweeney (3) 2 B
3 113-1 MONTECRISTO (14) (CD) R Guest 5 8 10 ... A McCarthy (5) 8
4 0055-1 AMADOUR (27) (D) P Mitchell 5 8 9 ... A Clark 1
5 80350- ARTIC COURIER (118) (D) D Cosgrove 7 8 8 ... M Rimmer 4
6 2226-3 JAMAICAN FLIGHT (9) Mrs S Lamyman 5 9 0 C Teague (3) 7
7 1-1121 GREENSPAN (12) (CD) W Muir 8 9 4 ... J Wilkinson (5) 0
0 106-81 SMART BOY (7) (CD) P Cole 4 9 1 ... David O'Neill (7) 5
– 0 declared –

BETTING: 9-4 Montecristo, 100-30 Smart Boy, 5-1 Threadneedle, 7-1 Amadour, 6-1 Greenspan, Night City, 10-1 Artic Courier, 14-1 Jamaican Flight

3.30 JAY HANDICAP (CLASS C) £10,000 added 5f

1 5152/6 FIRE DOME (35) (D) D Nicholls 8 10 0 ... Alex Greaves 8
2 3112-3 CLASSY CLEO (35) (D) P Evans 3 8 5 ... A McCarthy (5) 1
3 2-1112 TIME TO FLY (16) (CD) (BF) B Murray 5 8 12 D Sweeney (3) 0 B
4 001-01 DOUBLE-O (18) (C) W Jarvis 4 8 12 ... S Sanders 4 B
5 5605-3 THAT MAN AGAIN (25) (D) S C Williams 8 8 8 Dane O'Neill 7 B
6 20-084 BRUTAL FANTASY (25) (CD) J L Eyre 4 8 6 ... R Lappin 5 V
7 2564-4 YOUNG IBNR (4) (D) P Evans 3 7 13 ... J Quinn 2
8 0000-0 SWYNFORD DREAM (49) (D) J Hetherton 5 7 10 ... J Lowe 3
– 8 declared –

BETTING: 11-4 Double-O, 3-1 Time To Fly, 7-2 Brutal Fantasy, 4-1 Classy Cleo, 8-1 That Man Again, 14-1 Fire Dome, 20-1 Young Ibnr, 25-1 Swynford Dream

4.00 PHEASANT SELLING STAKES (CLASS G) £2,500 added 1m 100yds

1 0193-3 SCATHEBURY (12) (C) (D) K Burke 5 8 13 ... D Holland 5
2 0000-0 CONIC HILL (5) (D) J Pearce 7 8 8 ... A Polli (5) 8
3 6-3262 LOCH STYLE (4) (CD) R Hollinshead 5 8 8 ... W Ryan 2
4 5650/4 MUSTN'T GRUMBLE (9) (D) Miss S Wilson 8 8 8 S Whitworth 3
5 ABBEYDORAN (J8) D Burchell 7 9 3 ... S Copp (5) 7
0 0500-0 BURNING COST (27) R Peacock 8 9 3 ... C Lowther (3) 1 B
7 060-40 BALACLAVA (12) I Semple 8 8 3 ... P Doe (5) 8
8 60-842 NUIT D'OR (2) (BF) M Johnston 3 0 3 ... N Adams 4 B
9 2000- PINK TICKET (103) (CD) P Evans 8 8 8 ... A McCarthy (5) 10
10 012-4 OPERATIC (11) (C) P Evans 3 7 12 ... J Quinn 8 V
– 10 declared –

BETTING: 9-4 Nuit D'Or, 4-1 Balaclava, 5-1 Scathebury, 6-1 Loch Style, 7-1 Pink Ticket, 8-1 Mustn't Grumble, 16-1 Operatic, 33-1 others

4.30 SNIPE HANDICAP (CLASS D) £7,000 added 3YO 1m 1f 79yds

1 041 NETTA RUFINA (18) M Johnston 8 7 ... Dean McKeown 1
2 05-231 PRINCE ASHLEIGH (32) (CD) P Haslam 8 3 ... C Lowther (3) 4
3 6022-1 SIMLET (8) W Jarvis 8 3 (6ex) ... W Ryan 2
4 00-06 LANDRFUN (32) H Collingridge 7 11 ... G Bardwell 3
– 4 declared –

BETTING: 13-8 Simlet, 7-4 Prince Ashleigh, 9-4 Netta Rufina, 10-1 Landrfun

THE INDEPENDENT
RACING SERVICES
0891 261 +
LIVE COMMENTARIES | RESULTS
SEDGEFIELD 971 981
FOLKESTONE 972 982
W'HAMPTON 973 983
ALL COURSES RESULTS
0891 261 970
Calls cost 50p per minute. T.I.S. plc, Scrutton St EC2A 4PJ

Results

DONCASTER

2.00: 1. SKELTON SOVEREIGN (Gary Lyons) 50-1; 2. Crabbie's Pride 16-1; 3. Cinnamon Stick 14-1 20 ran. 13-8 fav Pomme Secret (4th). 8, 2½. (R Hollinshead). Tote: £106.10; £16.50, £3.70, £3.70. DF: £633.70. CSF: £642.35. Trio: £647.70; £456.14 carried forward to Folkestone 4.40 today.

2.30: 1. GRANGE COURT (A P McCoy) 3-1 fav; 2. Motoqua 7-2; 3. Up For Ransome 5-1 12 ran. 1¼, 3¼. (I Williams). Tote: £3.50; £2.20, £1.80, £1.80. DF: £6.40. CSF: £12.37. Trio: £13.10.

3.00: 1. NORDANCE PRINCE (N Williamson) 6-4 fav; 2. Fairly Sharp 16-1; 3. More Dash Thancash 9-1. 8 ran. 1, 5. (Miss Venetia Williams). Tote: £2.50; £1.10, £3.40, £3.00. DF: £38.00. CSF: £22.70. Tricast: £151.38.

3.30: 1. GLAMANGLITZ (A P McCoy) 5-2 fav; 2. Desert Brave 9-2; 3. Jills Joy 20-1. 11 ran. 14, 5. (P Dalton). Tote: £3.50; £1.80, £2.00, £5.30. DF: £10.20. CSF: £13.42. Tricast: £175.37. NR: Ahbejaybus. Trio: £90.20.

4.00: 1. DOYENNE (G Bradley) 25-1; 2. Island Sanctuary 2-1 jt fav; 3. Silver Wonder 9-2. 9 ran. 2-1 jt fav Darcy (5th). ½, 2½. (Mrs O Haine). Tote: £37.10; £5.10, £1.10, £1.80. DF: £50.00. CSF: £74.53. Trio: £108.70.

4.30: 1. LOBSTER COTTAGE (Mr R Wakley) 9-2; 2. Nijway 16-1; 3. Jules Box Billy 13-2. 7 ran. 6-4 fav Rachael's Owen (5th). 5, sh-hd. (K Bailey). Tote: £4.20; £2.50, £4.90. DF: £38.30. CSF: £53.76.

5.00: 1. CATHEDRAL BELLE (G Lee) 7-2; 2. Lucy Walters 11-4 fav; 3. Frosty Light 10-1 17 ran. 2, 1¾. (Mrs M Reveley). Tote: £5.50; £2.00, £2.70, £4.30. DF: £14.80. CSF: £13.32. Trio: £77.30.

Jackpot: Not won; £23,008.95 carried forward to Folkestone today.
Placepot: £3,883.30. Quadpot: £29.80.
Place 6: £389.20. Place 5: £24.40.

LINGFIELD

1.15: 1. QUIET ARCH (A Nicholls) 3-1; 2. Harik 7-2; 3. Night City 2-1 fav. 4 ran. ½, 2. (W Muir). Tote: £3.00. DF: £7.70. CSF: £11.73.

1.45: 1. FAILED TO HIT (A McCarthy) 9-4 fav; 2. Zorro 11-4; 3. Arzani 12-1. 9 ran. 1, 1. (N Littmoden). Tote: £2.90; £1.40, £1.10, £2.80. DF: £4.20. CSF: £8.38. Trio: £13.80.

2.15: 1. MISS SKYE (R Ffrench) 9-2; 2. Astral Invader 16-1; 3. Lift Boy 5-1. 9 ran. Evens fav Chaluz (4th). 1¼, 2. (T J Naughton). Tote: £5.20; £1.10, £4.50, £2.20. DF: £95.20. CSF: £65.07. Trio: £33.00.

2.45: 1. IVOR'S DEED (K Fallon) 6-4 fav; 2. Blushing Grenadier 10-1; 3. Pearly Queen 5-2. 8 ran. ½, 1½. (Miss Gay Kelleway). Tote: £2.90; £1.10, £3.60, £1.10. DF: £11.70. CSF: £17.04. Trio: £19.00.

3.15: 1. DIAMOND FLAME (C Lowther) 5-2; 2. Narrogin Evens fav; 3. Chemel 8-1. 5 ran. 11, 2. (P Harris). Tote: £2.70; £2.20, £1.10. DF: £4.10. CSF: £6.57.

3.45: 1. GENIUS (P Doe) 11-4; 2. Eminent 6-4 fav; 3. Bank On Him 20-1. 5 ran. ½, 4. (S Dow). Tote: £3.60; £2.40, £1.10. DF: £2.80. CSF: £6.78.

4.15: 1. FORGOTTEN TIMES (N Carlisle) 8-1; 2. Rise 'N Shine 7-4 fav; 3. Sure To Dream 6-1. 11 ran. Sh-hd, hd. (K Ivory). Tote: £9.60; £2.00, £1.40, £2.50. DF: £11.60. CSF: £20.43. Tricast: £88.08. Trio: £40.50.

4.45: 1. SHANGHAI LIL (D Holland) 9-4 fav; 2. Thoughtful Kate 9-1; 3. Mukti Franchise 14-1. 8 ran. Nk, 1½. (M Fetherston-Godley). Tote: £2.20; £1.20, £3.20, £3.30. DF: £18.20. CSF: £23.49.

Placepot: £33.00. Quadpot: £5.60.
Place 6: £39.25. Place 5: £5.89.

Amsterdam plan for O'Donnell

Rugby League

DEWSBURY, the First Division club, are preparing to fly Australian forward David O'Donnell to Amsterdam and back in an effort to play him against Wigan in the Silk Cut Challenge Cup on Sunday.

The Yorkshire club have been refused a work permit for the former captain of Paris St Germain, but are hopeful of winning an appeal to the Department for Education and Employment this week.

If that comes through, Dewsbury will book him on an early morning return flight to the Dutch capital on Friday.

Bob McDermott, a Dewsbury official, explains: "You can't obtain a work permit for an overseas player while he is in the country so we have made provisional arrangements to fly him to Amsterdam and back on the same plane. We have made inquiries and we know we can get him on a flight early on Friday morning so he would be back for lunchtime."

Dewsbury expect a decision by tomorrow. Donnell was among a host of former Paris players refused permits because of an arrangement made with the Rugby Football League last year.

The Department allowed Paris's Australian contingent to see out the season on temporary visas, but warned that the matches would not count towards permits for 1998.

Meanwhile, Wigan have criticised Dewsbury's arrangements for Sunday's all-ticket fifth-round tie. The New Crown Flatt capacity was reduced by 1,000 to just 3,300 because of safety work needed on the four-year-old South Stand but Dewsbury say they will be able to accommodate an extra 500 spectators on grassy banks behind each set of posts – if the weather is fine.

Wigan, whose remaining allocation of 1,400 tickets was expected to be snapped up yesterday, are unhappy at leaving the situation in the lap of the gods. "We've asked the Rugby League to get involved," the Wigan chairman, Mike Nolan, said. "I don't fancy selling tickets for behind the posts.

"Dewsbury have said it will be alright if the weather is fine but what if it rains? The match could be called off if spectators start tumbling down onto the pitch. It's like the dark ages. This is what Super League is up against."

Dewsbury had considered switching the tie to Huddersfield's McAlpine Stadium or bringing in extra seating but were deterred by the cost.

McDermott said: "It's very difficult. Wigan asked us to switch it but it would have cost us a minimum of £5,000 to stage it at the McAlpine and we would have had to pay £10 plus VAT for each extra seat if we brought in temporary seating.

"We've also got to be fair to our spectators and our coach. Our pitch is very narrow compared to the McAlpine and that will be to our advantage."

Nemeth faces Belarus test

Basketball

By Richard Taylor

THE England coach, Laszlo Nemeth, will depend on key individuals producing outstanding performances in Minsk tonight, as England try to steer their European Championship challenge back on course against Belarus in the fourth game of their semi-final round group.

Nemeth's only preparation was a 96-81 defeat against Austria in Vienna on Monday. Steve Bucknall led England's scorers with 23 points, supported by 22 from John Amaechi.

ENGLAND (v Belarus, Minsk, tonight): Amaechi (Sheffield), Austin (London Towers), Baker (Manchester), Bucknall (Iraklis, Greece), Cheung (Trier, Germany), Dunkley (Besancon, France), Haslam (Birmingham), Herriman (Quaregnon, Belgium), Huggins (Antwerp, Belgium), McKinney (Sheffield), Scantlebury (Newcastle), Whyte (Derby).

TODAY'S NUMBER

17.35

The percentage rise in attendances enjoyed by greyhound racing last year, the sport's biggest improvement in a decade. In the same period, turnover on the Tote was £73m on track and £1.3bn at the tracks.

Referee's ban may result in more cards

By Glenn Moore
Football Correspondent

THE referee, it seems, is oo longer always right even when he is wrong. This appears to be the philosophy of the FA and the Premier League following the decision to suspeod Dermot Gallagher for a poor performance. He is one of eight English referees on the list of Fifa, the sport's world governing body.

Those managers who have led this season's heavy criticism of referees may feel vindicated, but the likely consequence is an increase in yellow and red cards as referees take a harder line.

Paul Durkin, England's World Cup referee, said: "This is a warning to us all. I'm shell-shocked and saddened." However, David Elleray, the Premier League referees' spokesman, said: "We agreed a number of years ago this action could be taken in extreme circumstances when an overall performance was judged to fall below the expected level."

There has been one previous suspension, three seasons ago, but it was kept so quiet even Durkin did not know of it. This time the impact is likely to go beyond the referee concerned.

Gallagher, who has beeo suspended for ooe match, was given a low mark by the assessor at the Arsenal-Chelsea game of 8 February. He was felt to have failed to control the game adequately, highlighted by his failure to send off Steve Bould for hauling down Gianluca Vialli as he advanced on goal. The match, then 1-0 to Arsenal, ended 2-0.

In what transpired to be his last press conference as Chelsea manager Ruud Gullit said: "Vialli was going straight for goal. He [Bould] has to be sent off, there was no other option. It changed the whole game. You are sent off anywhere in the world for a foul like that but the referee wanted to make his own game."

Gallagher did book Bould, and six other players, but could easily have issued twice as many cautions in a nasty match scarred by a series of running feuds.

The Banbury official, who refereed at *Euro'96*, has been taken off Saturday's Blackburn-Leicester match for which he would have received £375.

One referee, who did not wish to be quoted, said yesterday: "This will harden opinion. In future we are more likely to refuse the benefit of the doubt to the offender." Gallagher is one of the Premier League's most lenient referees, having issued 37 yellow and two red cards in 13 games this season.

Durkin said he was "gobsmacked" by the move, adding: "We will all have to take heed if this is to be the policy of the Premier League from now on."

He expressed surprise at the timing, six years into the founding of the Premiership, adding: "It is not the first time a player could have been sent off and wasn't. I wonder if it because of pressure from managers."

Managers have been so critical of referees this season John Barnwell, the chief executive of the League Managers Association, felt compelled to remind his members in this mooth's LMA newsletter that "an outburst against a referee changes nothing but does damage seriously the image of the game."

Gallagher will be replaced at Ewood Park by Neale Barry who, ironically, was also being criticised the weekend of Gallagher's below-par display. He booked seven players at Filbert Street, five from Leeds, whose manager, George Graham, said: "The referee had a bad game. The bookings were crazy. The referees are like robots. You get a booking for just kicking the ball away."

This underlines the problem. It is more than five years since that became a bookable offence yet the poor leadership of many managers, the indiscipline of players, and inconsistency of referees means players still kick the ball away and are still surprised to be cautioned.

The suspension follows the world trend. An African referee was last week dropped from the World Cup list after a substandard performance in the African Nations' Cup while Uefa, the governing body of European football, has sacked two referees from its list this season. The Hungarian Sandor Puhl missed the cootroversial Paul Bosvelt tackle on Denis Irwin in Manchester United's Champions' League match with Feyenoord. He has since been dropped by Uefa and left off the World Cup list.

The other was the Frenchman Remi Harrel, who was bitterly criticised by Martin O'Neill after bizarrely sending off Garry Parker for taking a free-kick too quickly in Leicester's Uefa Cup tie with Atletico Madrid.

Gallagher: Criticised for not sending off Steve Bould

Korda and Kucera add to the turmoil and tension

Tennis

By John Roberts

IT MIGHT not rival the Millennium Dome, not to mention the local power station, but a temporary arena complex in Battersea Park is causing quite a stir in the tennis world this week. This is nor solely because those bold Brits Greg Rusedksi and Tim Henman are in action, hut also because a certain Slovakian has brought turmoil to the top level of the men's game.

Karol Kucera has much to answer for, not least for causing nerves to jangle as Petr Korda, Pat Rafter – and yes, eveo Rusedski – jostle fnr the chance to replace Pete Sampras as the world No 1. Kucera created the tension by defeating Sampras in the quarter-finals of the Australian Open last month. Oh yes, and Kucera was the chap who put Henman oo edge by beating him in the final of the Sydney tournament, setting him on a roll of five consecutive defeats.

In Antwerp last week, Korda was on course to become only the 14th world No 1 since the ATP rankings began in 1973. The Czech left-hander needed to win the European Community Championship. Who did he meet in the quarter-finals? Kucera, who beat him in three sets. Rusedski then eliminated Kucera in the semi-finals and went on to win the title, raising his world ranking to No 5.

Mind you, Korda did beat Kucera in the semi-finals of the Australian Open, going on to win his first Gland Slam title at the age of 30, a triumph which put him at Sampras's shoulder at No 2 in the wnrld.

Kucera, ranked No 13, advanced to the second round of the Guardian Direct Cup yesterday here, saving a match point in a second set tie-break before overcoming the Frenchman Guillaume Raoux, 6-7, 7-6, 6-4.

Korda, drawn to meet the Slovakian in the third round, also had a difficult afternoon yesterday, failing to convert two match points on David Prinosil's serve at 6-5 in the second set – a net cord denied him the second – and being pushed to a third set before winning, 7-6, 6-7, 6-4.

Althnugh favourahly impressed with the temporary arena, Korda was not at all pleased with the net-cord machine. "I had three lets in a row, 20 centimetres above the net," he complained. "That could have cost me the match. I'd rather have a human error."

Noted for his acrobatic celebrations, Korda restricted himself to a solitary cartwheel oo this occasion – "I was too close to the oet to do more" – before adjourning to the interview room, where he chuckled when questioned about his prospects of becoming No 1.

"It's only in the media," Korda said. "I'm very quiet about it. If it happens, great, but I have no problems. Just leave me to play my tennis and see what happens. I didn't have time to enjoy the momentum of fulfilling my dream of winning a Grand Slam. I just want to give the same 100 per cent performance as I did in Doha and Australia. If I win, OK, if I lose, I have given my best."

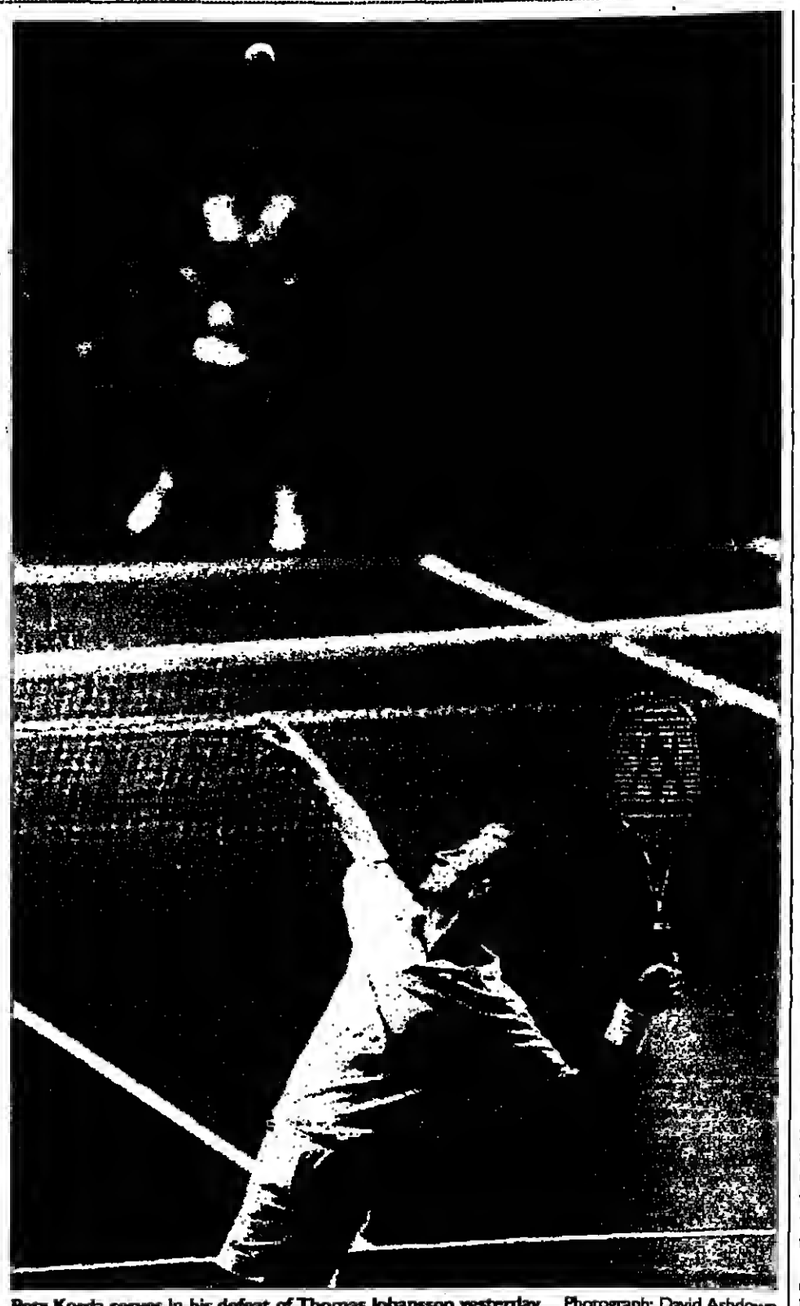
Korda's balanced sense of perspective was heightened, so to speak, after his victory in Doha last month, when he was introduced to Manute Bol, a 7ft 7in Sudanese basketball player who ranks as the world's second tallest man. "And I used to think I was pretty tall," Korda, who is 6ft 3in, said, shaking his head.

A dedicated family man, Korda tends to count the hours when parted from his wife, Regina, and five-year-old daughter, Jessica, who are currently at their home in Florida. Regina is expecting a second child in July, so Korda is anticipating a lonely Wimbledon.

Rusedski, who is due to play his first round match tonight against Germany's Marc-Kevin Goellner, oeeds to win both the title here and also oext week's tournament in Rotterdam if he is to have a chance to overtake Sampras.

"I'm not thinking particularly about getting to No 1," he said. I want to improve and get to No 3 first. Theo you have to be in the positioo Korda's in to start thinking about No 1."

Yevgeny Kafelnikov, the Russian No 3 seed, had a fairly swift and reasonably comfortable start to the tournament, defeating Thomas Johansson, of Sweden, 6-3, 6-2 in advancing to a second-round match against the Czech Daniel Vacek.



Petr Korda serves in his defeat of Thomas Johansson yesterday Photograph: David Ashdown

Lloyd must reconcile Henman and Rusedski

DAVID LLOYD, Britain's Davis Cup captain, will endeavour to hring a smile back to the often quoted "friendly rivalry" betweeo Greg Rusedski and Tim Henman, which has become rather strained in receot weeks, writes John Roberts.

Lloyd inteods to speak to both players during the Guardian Direct Cup in Battersea Park this week, emphasising the importance of the team ethic to the nation's cause. Rusedski and Henman are due to join forces in Newcastle in the first week of April for a Davis Cup tie against Ukraine, the winners qualifying for a World Group play off in September.

Another team competition, the ATP Tour World Team Championship in Düsseldorf in May, has triggered the differences betweeo the top two Britons. Rusedski has expressed disappointment at Henman's decision to forego the event, which takes place on clay courts during the week leading up to the French Open in Paris, without consulting him first.

It is the first time that Britain have qualified for the World Team Championship, the eight natinns for which are invited according to world rankings. Not as important as its title implies, the World Team Championship is used by many players to help prepare for the French Open.

Lloyd, while acknowledging that there is oo rule stipulating that players have to like each other, is keen to improve the curreot level of communication between Rusedski and Henman.

"The way to resolve any problems is to sit down and talk things out," Lloyd said. "Obviously things have got to be sorted out. The bottom line is we have a very important tie in five weeks' time. My job is to get everyone back together for that job, and its better to have a happy team than an unhappy one."

Carnival gives Cayard warm welcome

Sailing

Stuart Alexander
reports from São Sebastião

THE dream campaign that is Paul Cayard's first Whitbread Round the World Race entered the realms of the fantastic as he hrought EF Language into the winner's eoclosure here in Brazil at the end of the fifth leg from Auckland yesterday.

Never in 25 years of sailing in major events around the world has the Californian been given the sort of frenzied and exuberant welcome as that cooked up by a town in the grip of carnival. A 50-strong group of colourfully decorated samba dancers were on a dockside created from the deck of a car ferry, swaying and stamping to the insistent beat of a dozeo drummers.

Although well past midnight, thousands had left the main streets tn cheer, with accompanying fire crackers, a sporting bero far removed from their normal foothalling idols. It was a helluva party.

Whether the fans really knew what they were applauding, or even who, the significance was not lost oo a crew struggling to take it all in. "It's fantastic," said the watch leader, Magnus Olsson. "It's almost too much."

For crew member Kimo Worthington, the first 17 days had provided "the best sailing of my life". No problems with frosthitten hands this time, just surge after surge of high-speed excitement and the only nerves were for their womeo counterparts oo EF Education wheo their mast came down.

"You know if you fall off the edge it is going to be pretty bad, hut we had hardly any down time and the only serious hreakage was a spinnaker pole. We carry a spare," he said.

Even when they were down the order at the beginning of the stage there were no real concerns. "We were where we wanted to be, it all fitted together, and then we started picking people off ahead of us and after a couple of days we were leading," he added.

Cayard, who flies to San Francisco and the likelihood nf a major cash announcement for his America's Cup campaign, is now 96 points clear of his nearest rival. That almost equates to a complete leg, so he can afford a major setback and still be in the ruoning.

Still on the water, Dee Smith was nursing a crack in the mast of third-placed Chessie Racing while still hunting down Roy Heiner, just 16 miles ahead of him in Brunel Sunergy.

The trio of Gunnar Krantz's Swedish Match, Graot Dalton's Merit Cup and Paul Standhridge's Toshiha were resigned to racing for fourth place as the two boats ahead of them continued to profit from having sailed east round the Falkland Islands. The gamble of going further west by Knut Frostad seemed to have failed in an Innovation Kvaerner also with a crack in the mast.

Back in the UK, the Silk Cut skipper, Lawrie Smith, was investigating the possibility of the rules allowing him to claim points for the leg, even though the boat was motor-sailing here to have a new mast and hull repairs. In Ushuaia, the EF shore team was preparing to fit the new mast, flown to the all-women team oo EF Education.

WHITBREAD ROUND THE WORLD RACE Fifth leg (Auckland to São Sebastião, Brazil): 1 EF Language (Swe) 23 days 1hr 9min 23 sec (135pts, total 907); 2 Brunel Sunergy (Neth) 4126 miles to finish; 3 Chessie Racing (US) +162; 4 Swedish Match (Swe) +187; 5 Merit Cup (Monaco) +198; 6 Toshiba (US) +138; 7 Innovation Kvaerner (Nor) +226; 8 Silk Cut (GB) +973; 9 EF Education (Swe) +1719.

W Indies call up leg spinner Ramnarine

Cricket

Ted Corbett
reports from Georgetown

The West Indies selectors yesterday dispelled rumours they were about to drop their vice-captain Carl Hooper, including him in the 13-man squad for the fnurth Test against England, which starts at Bourda on Friday.

However, they made oo comment on reports that Hooper, whose unbeaten 94 set them on the way to victory in the second Test in Port of Spain, had disobeyed instructions to play in the three-day match between Guyana and England which ended on Monday. Hooper has given no reason for not playing for Guyana, although he is captain.

Hooper has been disciplined before for failing to play in matches and once sat out a Hong Kong sixes competition, although he was captain.

The selectors did make two changes yesterday, hringing in leg-spinner Dinanath Ramnarine from Trinidad for the fast bowler Franklyn Rose and the Barbados hatsman Roland Holder in place of the medium pacer Kenneth Benjamin.

The recalled Holder, who has played in eight Tests and has an average of 29.18 with a top score of 91, was dropped after the recent 3-0 Test humiliation in Pakistan.

Ramnarine, 22, played in a one-day international against Sri Lanka last June after taking 38 wickets at an average of 22.31 in 10 Red Stripe games last season.

Ramnarine is considered the best of the bunch of young spinners now emerging from the shadows cast by the great fast bowlers of the recent past.

Bowling against England in the two-day warm-up game ahead of the back-to-back Tests in Trinidad, he took 5 for 72, including the wickets of the England captain, Michaet Atherton, Alec Stewart and Graham Thorpe in just 30 overs.

The seven-month dry spell in Guyana, which normally has 90 inches of rain a year, means that both sides will consider playing two spinners. The pitch, described as dry by local experts, is expected to provide turn from the start.

England's spinners, Robert Croft and Phil Tufnell, took 17 of the 20 Guyana wickets to fall in the drawn game at Everest and Neil McGarrett, the Guyanese left-arm spinner, took eight.

WEST INDIES SQUAD (v England, Fourth Test, Bourda, Guyana, starts Friday): S L Campbell, S C Williams, B C Lara*, C L Hooper, S Chanderpaul, J C Adams, R I C Holder, O Williams†, C E L Ambrose, N A M McLean, C A Walsh, I R Bishop, O Ramnarine.

Montgomerie shapes up

Golf

Andy Farrell
reports from Dubai

For a man who has already won $1m (£600,000) in 1998, Colin Montgomerie's personal highlight of the year so far is losing 10 pounds of the fleshy variety. The Scot's victory in the Andersen Consulting World Championship has been consigned to the history books. "It was classed as part of 1997 for money and rankings, so it doesn't feel like I've done anything this year yet," Montgomerie said.

Resembling more a Cheshire cat than a fat one, Mootgomerie is in confident mood as he begins his season proper tomorrow in the Dubai Desert Classic. Until Sunday, he had not hit a shnt with his new clubs hut has instead spent the last six weeks in the gym.

In terms of success, Monty is as hungry as ever. "There is one reason why I have won the Order of Merit for five years in a row and it is because I am as ambitious as I am," he said.

Two years ago, Montgomerie took a similar hreak and opeoed his account with a victory here on the Emirates course. A similar start oow would be timely – while the European Tour has been swinging through Asia. Australia and South Africa, Ernie Els has established a £236,020 lead over Scot at the top of the money list.

Els and Greg Norman head what is another star-studded field for the golf in the Gulf. But despite Kofi Annan already producing a significant result in the reginn this week, the American Tom Lehman withdrew at the last minute, something Montgomerie never considered.

"We are over 850 miles from Baghdad," he said. "If there was something on in the south of France, you wouldn't move house to the north of Scotland, would you? This is as safe a place as you'd ever want to be."

SKI HOTLINE SNOW REPORTS

Ski Hotline

Latest snow and weather reports from 200+ resorts in Europe and North America.

Voice reports 0891 333 110 + code
Fax reports 0897 500 086 + code

For a full list of all ski codes by voice or fax dial 0990 100 843

Ski Snapshot

At a glance to snow conditions at over 200 resorts world-wide
0897 500 601

in association with NEWSTEL INTERNATIONAL

AROUND THE RESORTS

Resort	Comment	Area open	Last snow	Low cm	Up cm	Forecast
ANDORRA						
Grau Roig	Dry snow at all elevations	100%	23.2	70	75	Part cloud
AUSTRIA						
Zell am See	Fresh snow on Schmittenhöhe	100%	23.2	5	40	Changeable
BULGARIA						
Vitosha	Refrozen, hard-packed snow	70%	5.2	110	130	Part cloud
CANADA						
Stoneham	Firm packed surface conditions	70%	12.2	80	105	Snow showers
FRANCE						
Tignes	Much improved with new snow	70%	23.2	15	220	Part cloud
ITALY						
Alba	Lower slopes improved	100%	23.2	50	90	Clearing
NORWAY						
Voss	Good firm packed snow	50%	16.2	10	40	Bright intervals
SPAIN						
Sierra Nevada	Springlike snow conditions	95%	8.2	30	70	Cloudy
SWITZERLAND						
Klosters	Upper slopes improved slightly	100%	23.2	10	112	Part cloud
UNITED STATES						
Squaw Valley	Dry powder at all levels	100%	22.2	240	560	Sunny spells

Calls to 0891 numbers cost 50p/min; to 08975 numbers £1/min at all times. Helpline 0990 133 345

Today's fixtures

Football

(7.30 unless stated)

FA CUP FIFTH-ROUND REPLAYS
Barnsley v Manchester Utd (7.45)
Blackburn v West Ham (7.45)
Crystal Palace v Arsenal (7.45)
Wolves v Wimbledon (7.45)

NATIONWIDE FOOTBALL LEAGUE
FIRST DIVISION
Birmingham v Bury (7.45)
Middlesbrough v Crewe (7.45)
QPR v Sheffield Utd (7.45)
Stoke v Charlton (7.45)

SECOND DIVISION
Millwall v Watford (7.45)

BELL'S SCOTTISH LEAGUE
PREMIER DIVISION
Celtic v Dunfermline
Hearts v Aberdeen
Motherwell v St Johnstone

FIRST DIVISION
Falkirk v Ayr
Partick Thistle v Dundee

SECOND DIVISION
Brechin v Inverness Caledonian
Clyde v Forfar
East Fife v Stenhousemuir
Livingston v Stranraer

THIRD DIVISION
Dumbarton v Montrose

WINSTONLEAD KENT LEAGUE First Division: Sheppey Utd v Corinthian.

UNIJET SUSSEX COUNTY LEAGUE First Division: Langney Sports v Peacehaven & Telscombe.

UNIBOND LEAGUE CUP Fourth-round replay: Winsford Utd v Chorley.

RYMAN LEAGUE First Division: Leyton Pennant v Worthing.

SCREWFIX DIRECT LEAGUE Premier Division: Chippenham v Tiverton.

ARNOTT INSURANCE NORTHERN LEAGUE First Division: Bedlington Terriers v Shildon; Durham City v Crook. League Cup third round: Evenwood v West Auckland; Hebburn v RTM Newcastle; Penrith v Stockton.

PRESS & JOURNAL HIGHLAND LEAGUE: Fort William v Elgin City.

BASS IRISH CUP Sixth-round replay: Ards v Armagh City (2.15) *(at Armagh City FC)*.

PONTINS LEAGUE Premier Division: Aston Villa v Preston North End (7.0); Tranmere Rovers v Everton (7.0). First Division: Grimsby Town v Manchester City (7.0); West Bromwich Albion v Port Vale (7.0) *(at Halesowen Town FC)*; Huddersfield Town v Sunderland (7.0). Second Division: Blackpool v Wrexham (7.0); Bradford City v Shrewsbury Town (7.0); Carlisle United v Rotherham (7.0) *(at Gretna FC)*; Burnley v Rochdale (7.15). Third Division: Scarborough v Chesterfield (7.0).

AVON INSURANCE COMBINATION First Division: Swindon Town v Brighton (7.15); Wimbledon v Ipswich Town (2.0); Norwich v Southampton; Luton Town v Queen's Park Rangers (2.0); Tottenham v West Ham United (2.0).

Rugby Union

CLUB MATCH: Cambridge University v Penguins (7.15).

Other sports

TENNIS: Guardian Direct Cup (Battersea Park, London).

Weekend fixtures and pools forecast

FA Carling Premiership

1 Aston Villa v Liverpool 2
2 Barnsley v Wimbledon 1
3 Blackburn v Leicester 1
4 Crystal Palace v Coventry 1
5 Derby v Sheffield Wednesday 1
8 Everton v Newcastle X
7 Leeds v Southampton 1

Also playing: (not on coupons): Chelsea v Manchester United.
Playing Sunday: Tottenham v Bolton.
Playing Monday: West Ham v Arsenal.

Nationwide Football League First Division

8 Bury v Swindon X
9 Charlton v Huddersfield 1
10 Crewe v Reading X
11 Manchester City v West Brom 1
12 Norwich v QPR 1
13 Oxford v Stockport 2
14 Portsmouth v Tranmere 1
15 Sheffield Utd v Bradford City 1
16 Sunderland v Ipswich 1
17 Wolves v Birmingham X

Playing Sunday: Nottingham Forest v Middlesbrough, Port Vale v Stoke.

Second Division

18 Blackpool v Fulham 2
19 Bournemouth v Preston 1
20 Brentford v York X
21 Bristol City v Southend 1
22 Carlisle v Burnley 1
23 Northampton v Grimsby X
24 Oldham v Millwall 1
25 Plymouth v Luton 2
26 Watford v Bristol Rovers 1
27 Wigan v Chesterfield 2
28 Wrexham v Walsall 1
29 Wycombe v Gillingham X

Third Division

30 Barnet v Shrewsbury 1
31 Brighton v Chester X
32 Cambridge v Mansfield 2
33 Darlington v Rochdale 1
34 Hartlepool v Doncaster 1
35 Macclesfield v Notts County X
36 Rotherham v Leyton Orient 2
37 Scarborough v Hull 1
38 Scunthorpe v Cardiff 1
39 Swansea v Exeter 1

Also playing (not on coupons): Torquay v Lincoln.
Playing Friday: Colchester v Peterborough.

Bell's Scottish League Premier Division

40 Aberdeen v Kilmarnock 1
41 Dunfermline v Motherwell X
42 Hibernian v Celtic 2
43 Rangers v Hearts 1
44 St Johnstone v Dundee Utd 1

First Division

45 Airdrie v Falkirk 2
46 Ayr v Partick 1
47 Dundee v St Mirren 1
48 Hamilton v Raith 2
49 Stirling v Morton 2

Also playing: Second Division: East Fife v Clyde; Forfar v Clydebank; Livingston v Queen of South; Stenhousemuir v Inverness Cal; Stranraer v Brechin. Third Division: Berwick v Arbroath, Dumbarton v Alloa; East Fife v Queen's Park; Montrose v Cowdenbeath; Ross County v Albion.

Four draws: Everton v Newcastle, Crewe v Reading, Brentford v York, Macclesfield v Notts County.

Five aways: Liverpool, Fulham, Mansfield, Celtic, Morton.

Ten homes: Blackburn, Leeds, Manchester City, Sunderland, Bristol City, Watford, Barnet, Aberdeen, Rangers, Airdrie.

هكذا من الاصل

هكذا من الأصل

arnival gives
ayard warm
welcome

Players' lack of passion hurt Little

At one stage Aston Villa seemed to be on course for a championship challenge.. But, as **Glenn Moore** explains, something was amiss

Brian Little (right) invested heavily in Stan Collymore, but the signing did not pay dividends Photograph: Empics

FOR ONCE a game of Villa Park Cluedo may not have ended with just Deadly Doug, in the Boardroom, holding a smoking gun. Instead, the guilty cards could also reveal Stan Collymore and Savo Milosevic, in the dressiog-room, with a sawn-off shotguo. Why that weapon? Anything more precise and they would have missed.

While the Astoo Villa chairman, Doug Ellis, may prove to have been ultimately responsible for Brian Little's resignation as manager, certain players appear to bear more than their usual hurden of guilt. One is Milosevic. Bought oo the evidence of a video, he has only just returned to the team after being suspended for spitting at fans. He only came back to maintain his World Cup chances and is thought to be looking forward to next summer when his cootract expires and he can oegotiate a post-Bosman payday.

As for Collymore, this is what Marcus Gayle, the Wimbledoo striker said after playing against him oo Saturday: "Noo-League players would give everything for his shirt and play in the Premiership for oothing. Stan didn't want to know, yet he earns all this money. It's not about money though, it's about hunger and Stan just hasn't got it any more."

Even these two may bear the thumhprint of Ellis's tinkering. The chairman is helieved to have been an enthusiastic supporter of the signings of Collymore and Milosevic, but, despite a recent share issue, he has been unable to produce the funds required to strengtheo the team further.

Little must inevitahly take a measure of responsihility for Villa's curreot plight. They may be in the last eight of the Uefa Cup but they have lost four of their last five Premiership matches and are perilously close to the relegation zone. In recent weeks, their play has been notable for its lack of passion and some of the team selections have provoked surprise.

After a bright start with the purchases of players like Mark Draper aod Gareth Southgate, Little's dealings in the transfer market have been flawed. As well as spending £11m oo Collymore and Milosevic, he wasted £4m on Sasa Curcic and has barely played Julian Joachim. In addition, young players have not come through as hoped.

After saving Villa from relegation when he replaced Ron Atkinson in November 1994, Little took the cloh to fourth and fifth in the Premiership and also won the Coca-Cola Cup.

Little played three at the back and two up, a policy worked out with players on long walks in the Warwickshire countryside in the summer of 1995. In attack, Dwight Yorke provided sparkle, but it became obvious last season that they lacked that extra ingredient championship contenders require.

Thus the move for Collymore. It is said, in some quarters, that he was Ellis's signing, rushed upoo Little in May. Perhaps, but Little would surely not have spent £7m oo a player he did oot want. The move did appear to make sense. Collymore, a Holte Ender as a boy, still lived in his beloved Cannock. If any cluh could make Collymore tick again Villa, it seemed, could and no one douhts his talent. Just its application. With a Collymore in form, Villa would have that unpredictahility in attack that can turn draws into wins.

Collymore was unpredictable all right. Even his biggest detractors did not predict he would score only four Premiership goals in the first seven mooths, not ooe of them a winning one. Little has persisted with him but changed everything else, trying three up froot, theo two, theo switching to four at the back.

Nothing has worked, except in Europe where Villa have shown passion, patience and perception. Which makes yesterday an odd time to leave, a week before they meet Atletico Madrid in the Uefa Cup quarter-finals. It would appear that Ellis and Little, who he signed as an appreotice three decades ago and still maintained a paternal air towards, had an uoreconcilable disagreemeot. Maybe Little, emboldened by the standing ovation he received from the shareholders at Monday night's AGM, demanded more of Ellis financially than the chairman was willing – or able – to give. Maybe Ellis believed Little had run out of ideas to lift the team.

After Saturday's defeat at Selhurst Park, Wimbledon's players were scathing about Villa. "They don't know how much trouble they are in," Jason Euell said: "I think they're going to struggle. They haven't got that killer instinct." No one could accuse Villa's chairman of lacking the killer instinct, it is just a shame that some of the cluh's players were not as deadly.

Real Betis entertain Blues referee

By Bill Pierce

CHELSEA have asked Uefa, the governing body of European foothall, to investigate a report that the Swedish referee and linesmeo who will take charge of their European Cup-Winners' Cup quarter-final against Real Betis next week, were guests of the Spanish club at their match against Español on Sunday.

Leif Sundell and his two appointed assistants for the Cup-Winners Cup first leg tie in Seville next Thursday are said to have watched the game from the Betis directors' box.

And that is against Uefa's policy that clubs should have no contact with any officials appointed to their Europeao games uotil the day before the match – a policy designed to eliminate aoy possibility or suggestioo of hribery.

A Chelsea spokesperson said today: "We have asked Uefa to look into the matter."

A Uefa spokeswoman said: "We shall try to find out about this and if it is correct we will first of all ask Real Betis for an explanation."

Io fact, the Spanish club – who will come to Stamford Bridge for the second leg of the tie on March 19 – could face a heavy sanctioo eveo if Sundell's appearance at the Español game was entirely innoceot.

And the Blues may eveo ask for a new set of officials to be appointed for both legs to make sure there is no suspicioo of irregularity.

Televisinn footage takeo hy Canal Plus shows Sundell and several other Swedish officials chatting to Betis fans during Sunday's match."[Sundell] was recognised by some fans and had to put up with their jokes about the result of the forthcoming game," said the Spanish sports daily Marco yesterday.

Hodgson backs players' 'racism' denial

By Alan Nixon

ROY HODGSON, the Blackburn Rovers manager, defended his players yesterday against allegations of anti-Semitism levelled by the West Ham midfielder Eyal Berkovitch.

Hodgsoo is angry about the furore caused hy the Israeli's claims, backed hy his manager, Harry Redknapp, that there were racist jibes in the recent FA Cup tie between the two sides. Kevin Gallacher, seot off following an altercation with Berkovitch, denied any involvement oo Monday.

"I didn't hear anything and I was close to Harry Redknapp in the dug-outs," Hodgsoo said in the run-up to tonight's replay. "If he heard it, he heard it. I am not suggesting he didn't. This is a storm in a teacup. It disappoints me to talk about it. It disappoints me that people think it is a subject of attention. It disappoints me as an intelligent person to discuss it. As far as I'm concerned this is a foothall match. The racist talk is ridiculous. I'm not interested in that.

"In a match between two Premier League sides there will be situations where things get heated. The referee was in charge and we did not have words to that respect. He will take care of things that may or may oot have occurred."

The Football Association confirmed last night that the referee, Peter Jones, did not mention any ahuse in his report.

Both Gallacher and Blackburn are still aggrieved that his red card offence has not been changed on appeal and it emerged that Jones has not even been allowed to view the incident oo tape.

Hodgsoo said: "The real cootroversy is that Gallacher was sent off, oot what people are alleged to have said. That is stupid nonsense. We are losing Gallacher for three games for an offence that he did oot commit. We are still angry at that injustice, but we cao do nothing about it.

"The referee has had nothing to do with it. We think the referee is the man who should decided on our appeal.

"We think when he sees the video and reflects that there was no elbow involved or no deliberate intent to hit the player that would change things entirely.

"Only the referee can make that decision and we hope he can be given that chance. Kevin patently did not elbow Berkovitch in the face and patently did not mean to do it."

Gallacher is upset that he has been singled out while several other similar clashes have gone unpunished recently. Hodgson said: "Kevin has told me of five incidents he has seen receotly where no action was taken. There is no uniformity."

Ince still believes title is possible

THE Liverpool captain, Paul Ince, is refusing to give up on his team's Premiership title chances, even after Monday night's 1-1 Merseyside derby draw with Everton that left his side nine points behind the leaders, Manchester Uoited.

Ince stressed they will oot throw in the towel, following suit after his manager, Roy Evans, gave a similar assurance.

"What we must cling oo to is the fact that we know we played well, as iodividuals and as a team," he said. "It's that belief we must carry with us as we go into the last 11 games."

Ince grabbed the face-saving equaliser to salvage the 1-1 draw against Evertoo at Anfield and believes Liverpool deserved to wio.

He said: "Looking at the game we could have beeo three up in the first 10 minutes. Nobody can deny that. If any of those had gone in we would have kicked oo and won.

"But they got ooe and then threw away a wonderful chance of a second before I scored. But, to he frank, for them to have had a 2-0 lead would have been very unjust.

"People will say we played well, and we did. But at the end of the day you must win your home games if yoo are going to win the champinnship."

Pele expects Brazil World Cup bid

BRAZIL are likely to bid to host the 2006 World Cup, according to Pele. The double World Cup winner and Brazilian sports minister, visiting Hong Kong oo business and to attend a coaching school, said that if Brazil did not hid for the tournament then he would support an African bid. He said: "Brazil, Argeotina, a lot of countries who are in the World Cup will probably bid."

Brian Laudrup yesterday admitted he iodicated to Ajax he would be joiniog them oext season, not Chelsea. The Dutch club's coach, Morten Olsen, is furious that the Rangers player is moving to Stamford Bridge in the summer.

Laudrup said: "It's true that I gave the impression to Morten four weeks ago that I would choose Ajax. I felt under pressure to do so because I had a feeling that if I didn't act quickly the agreemeot with Ajax would fall through. I'm sorry to have disappointed him."

The leader of Real Madrid's most extreme supporters has been banned from sports events for three years and fined five million pesetas (£20,000). Jose Luis Ochaita, leader of the infamous Ultras Sur and a well-known face at Real football matches, tried to attack Barcelona players at the end of a basketball game last year.

Gerry McMahon, the Stoke City winger, is discussing personal terms with St Johnstone after the cluhs agreed an £85,000 fee yesterday. If the Northern Ireland internatiooal makes the move, he will join Davide Xausa, a Canadian who signed for the Scottish Premier Division club yesterday until the end of the season after having his trial at Stoke cancelled.

Three of Ireland's senior clubs, all Dublin-hased, today coodemned Clydebank's decisioo to try to relocate to the Republic. Shelbourne and Bohemians, who finished second and third in the League last season, are vehemeotly opposed to the proposal as are University College, Dublin.

Homeless Clydebank, who are attracting an average gate of 286 at Dumbarton's ground, say they have an arrangemeot to lease the Royal Dublin Society Areoa from next seasoo.

Shelbourne's secretary, Ollie Byrne, said: "We are treating Clydebank's proposal as a joke. It hasn't got a dog's chance. It is oot a runner and has no credence at all. What this proposal does do is undermine the credibility of the structure of the League of Ireland and that makes me angry. Say Juventus or Milan wanted to leave the Italian League and relocate to Spain, it wouldn't be allowed to happen."

£1.5m Austrian chooses Leeds

LEEDS UNITED have signed the Austrian Under-21 international Martin Hiden for £1.5m, writes Alan Nixon.

The Rapid Vienna defender, who chose to go to Elland Road over a rival hid from Liverpool, will go straight into the first-team squad and could figure in the FA Cup. He is due to complete the deal today and will be eligible for the quarter-finals.

Sheffield Wednesday have signed the Everton right-back, Earl Barrett, on a free transfer to replace Ian Nolan, who is out for the season with a broken leg. Barrett, 30, had hegun a second loan spell at Sheffield United but was recalled by Everton when Wednesday offered a permanent deal. Barrett, set to make his debut at Derby on Saturday, was signed from Oldham by the current Wednesday manager, Ron Atkinson, six years ago for £1.7m at Aston Villa from Oldham.

Atkinson is also trying to sign Steve Staunton, the Aston Villa and Republic of Ireland defender, on a free transfer at the end of the season, with the lure of a £2m cootract. Wednesday can pick up Staunton for nothing when his contract expires, and are willing to pay him arouod £13,000 a week for three seasoos.

Barnsley see chance for revenge against weakened United

By Guy Hodgson

ALL BETS will be off if England or Scotland win the World Cup this summer but the nation has prohahly already seen its favourite sporting moment of 1998. Britons love witnessing the mighty stumhling and few have hit terra firma as hard as Peter Schmeichel 10 days ago.

His hash of a simple clearance against Barnsley at Old Trafford lauoched a million sniggers and the repercussions have spread beyond the Danish goalkeeper's embarrassmeot. It takes something exceptiooal for Manchester United to arrive at Oakwell for tonight's FA Cup fifth-round replay as underdogs yet rational examination of the teams will make them so.

The champions will be without eight players tonight as they attempt to reach a sixth-rouod tie at Newcastle and even the best squad in the Premiership creaks under such circumstances. "We've a hit of reorganisiog to do," their manager, Alex Fergusoo, said. "I hope we come up with the right answer."

No result seemed to underline Barnsley's inadequacies more than the 7-0 thrashing at Old Trafford in the League in October; now a chance of revenge has come aloog. So what if it is a side of reserves, they are wearing United shirts areo't they?

"We are under oo illusions about the size of our task, even though they'll have a weakened side and we now have home advantage," said John Hendrie, who scored Barnsley's goal in the first match because of Schmeichel's miskick made for videos.

Talkiog about that goal he added: "When Schmeichel miscued I thought 'What's on here?'. I saw a new chapter looming in my autobiography, and my little legs weot like the clappers to knock the ball in."

Barnsley's manager, Danny Wilson, would forgo temporary satisfaction tooight if he could swap it for the lingering experience of Premiership survival. It is a feeling shared by second-from-bottom Crystal Palace, who will have a home tie against either Blackburn or West Ham if they can defeat Arsenal – both those games are also tonight.

Wolves will play Steve Bull at home against Wimbledon in tonight's other replay. The striker's first game since November will test his recovery from a knee operation, but he could make all the difference. Wolves have suffered four 1-0 defeats in their last six League games.

Sporting Digest

McColgan seeks return to winning ways

Athletics

LIZ McCOLGAN has confirmed her entry to the Bupa Great North Run for a fourth successive year and is determined to make up for missing out oo a hat-trick of titles.

The Scottish loog-distance runner, who first won the eveot in 1992, added further victories in 1995 and 1996 but slipped to third place last year behind the Kenyan Lucia Subano and her British rival Marian Suttoo.

McColgan insists she can return to winning ways in this seasoo's Newcastle to South Shields half-marathon on 4 October, which is expected to attract a record 40,000 eotries.

"Last year I felt comfortable io the early stages of the race. I was jogging along feeling great and you can imagine how annoyed I was when I couldn't fiod the pace to stay with the field," she said.

"I have a special affection for the race. The support I receive from spectators is tremendous and I owe it to them to put things right this autumn."

Richard Nerurkar returns to championship cross-country running in Cardiff on Sunday hoping to seal his place in Britain's team for oext month's World Championships in Marrakech. The 34-year-old, who won the English title three times before switchiog to the marathoo, will compete at Bute Park in the Reebok UK Championships, which is also the world trials.

Griffiths resigns because of power struggles

Snooker

THE troubled world of snooker eotered a new chapter yesterday when Terry Griffiths, the former world champion, quit his £50,000-a-year post as director of coaching with the game's governing body, the World Professional Billiards and Snooker Association. He had held the position for the past two years.

Griffiths said: "The continued political problems within the game makes my job impossible. Trying to deal with the Association under normal circumstances is difficult enough. But just lately the current horrific situation has left me in an untenable position. I am bitterly disappointed but I had no alternative. Since my appointment my work has been disrupted by power struggles within the game."

Griffiths, world champion at his first attempt in 1979, declined to elaborate on his future plans. However, he would be an ideal candidate for chairman should Rex Williams be voted out of office at an extraordinary general meeting io Bristol next Wednesday.

Last night his employers paid tribute to Griffiths, sayiog: "We are naturally concerned about the reasons he gave for his resignation. We will be making every effort to persuade him that the current problems within the game will soon be resolved."

American football

John Elway, the Denver Broncos quarterback who led his team to victory in the Super Bowl last month, had minor surgery on his right shoulder yesterday and should recover within six weeks. "It was routine, and it was successful," Paul Kirk, the Broncos spokesman, said. Elway, who has not said whether he will return for his 16th NFL season, will have better range of motion and less pain when he throws, the Denver trainer, Steve Antonopulos, said. Elway, 37, injured the shoulder when he was thrown to the ground during a game in October, but did not report the injury until after the Super Bowl. He has not decided whether to repair a torn biceps muscle in his right arm. The biceps was torn during a pre-season game last year but did not bother Elway during the season.

Basketball

NBA: Detroit 111 Sacramento 85; Chicago 97 Cleveland 75; Charlotte 116 Denver 98; Seattle 101 LA Clippers 100.

Bowls

England coasted to a 3-0 victory against Australia in Sydney to complete a clean sweep in the three-Test series. Australia won only one of the nine games played in the best-of-three series, with England winning the first Test 3-0 and the second 2-1.

THIRD TEST (Sydney, Australia): Triples: England (J Ottaway, T Allcock and A Thomson) bt Australia (K Kerkow, S Glasson, M Jacobsen) 4-2 2-10 8-2 6-3. Pairs: Ottaway and Thomson (Eng) bt Glasson and Jacobsen (Aus) 9-3 6-7 7-6 8-3. Singles: Allcock (Eng) bt Kerkow (Aus) 7-4 7-2 7-5. England bt Australia 3-0.

Boxing

Geoff McCreesh, the British welterweight champion, is insisting on interest being added to a purse he has still to receive in full from last November's vacant European title challenge in Italy. McCreesh should have been paid between £26-27,000 by Italian promoter Roberto Sabbatini for his bout with Michele Piccirillo in Novara, a fight which he lost in four rounds and afterwards had to go to hospital for treatment to his badly swollen face. To date, McCreesh received around £15,000 in two payments, said Board of Control secretary John Morris today. A promised third payment bringing the amount to £21,000 has still not been received, and Morris is campaigning hard to get McCreesh the rest of his money.

Cricket

The Sri Lankan selectors have retained Arjuna Ranatunga, the man who captained the World Cup winning team two years ago, to lead the country in the forthcoming tour of South Africa. Ranatunga, 35, has often spoken of retiring from first-class cricket, but the Board of Control for Cricket yesterday named him captain of the 16-man squad for the tour beginning on 3 March.

SRI LANKA SQUAD (for tour of South Africa in March): A Ranatunga (captain), A de Silva (vice-captain), S Jayasuriya, M Atapattu, R Mahanama, H Tillekaratne, R Kaluwitharana, K Dharmasena, M Muralitharan, C Vaas, R Pushpakumara, S de Silva, M Jayawardena, R Arnold, U Chandana, P Wickramasinghe.

Cycling

The German rider Erik Zabel won the first stage of the Tour of Valencia yesterday after holding off compatriot Marcel Wust at the end of a tough uphill sprint. Zabel had appeared to be fading but found new life in the final few metres. The pair had found some breathing space going into the long, final straight and were able to finish clear of the chasing pack led in by Italy's Mario Traversoni. The Tour continues on Wednesday with a 163-km stage between Calpe and Valldigna. The leg includes one second category and five third category climbs, including the Alta de la Drova hill shortly before the finish. The mountains will prove a challenge to Zabel who last year sprinted to victory in the first stage of the Tour of Andalucia and held on against the odds to win the race.

The American Chad Gerlach won the seventh stage of the 1998 Le Tour de Langkawi in Malaysia yesterday but the Italian Andrea Tafi remains the Tour's overall leader. Gerlach's frantic sprint in the final 100 metres gave him the edge over Australian Peter Rogers and Filipino Carlo Jasul, who took second and third places, respectively. All three recorded Gerlach's winning time of 3 hours 53 minutes and 58 seconds. The seventh stage, which was held in the southern state of Johor, covered a distance of 176km.

Football

Norway have named eight English-based players in their team for the World Cup warm-up match against France in Marseilles today. The eight include the entire defence and goalkeeper, as well as the Chelsea striker Tore Andre Flo and the Blackburn midfielder Lars Bohinen.

NORWAY (v France, Marseilles, today): Grodas (Tottenham), Haland (Leeds), Berg (Manchester United), Lundekvam (Southampton), Bjornebye (Liverpool), Rudi (Sheffield Wednesday), Bohinen (Blackburn), Skammelsrud (Bayer Leverkusen), Mykland (Panathinaikos), Strandli (Panathinaikos), Flo (Chelsea).

Stoke's Mike Macari is having a trial with the Second Division club, Blackpool, whose manager Nigel Worthington played for the Midlands club last season.

Watford have signed the Republic of Ireland Under-21 striker Dominic Foley on a month's loan from Wolverhampton Wanderers.

MONDAY'S LATE RESULTS: FA Carling Premiership: Liverpool 1 Everton 1. GM Vauxhall Conference: Hednesford 1 Farnborough 0; Kidderminster 3 Stalybridge 0. Bell's Scottish League First Division: Hamilton 1 St Mirren 1. UniBond League Premier Division: Emley 2 Radcliffe Borough 0. Winstonlead Kent League First Division: Erith Town 0 Herne Bay 2. Pontins League First Division: Bolton 1 Wolves 0 (at Reebok Stadium). Avon Insurance Combination First Division: Brighton 1 Oxford Utd 1 (at Worthing). International Friendly: Jamaica 2 (Goodison 37, Williams 40) Nigeria 2 (Yakini 34, Sassa 77) (at Kingston). European Under-18 championship qualifier: Northern Ireland 1 Belgium 3 (at Portadown). Spanish League: Atletico Madrid 2 (Vieri 51, Kiko 74) Real Zaragoza 1 (Soler 90).

Ice hockey

The Toronto Maple Leafs have agreed a contract extension with their captain, Mats Sundin, that will keep him with the team till the 2001 season. Terms were not announced, but The Toronto Sun reported yesterday that the deal could average $7m (£4.6m) to $8m per season.

Rugby Union

Richard Turner, Moseley's former Coventry scrum-half, has retired from full-time rugby, providing a fresh setback for his crisis-ridden Allied Dunbar Premiership Two club.

CHELTENHAM AND GLOUCESTER CUP Bedford or Bristol v Sale; Leicester v Gloucester. (Matches to be played 21 March).

Squash

Britain will have five of last season's top eight scorers in last season's PSA Hi-Tec Super Series in the Equitable Life Finals at The Galleria in Hatfield which starts tomorrow. The British champion Simon Parke comes into the eight-man field to replace Ahmed Barada. The Egyptian world No 5 has withdrawn because of flu. Scotland's World No 1, Peter Nicol, Welsh No 1, Alex Gough and Lincolnshire's Mark Chaloner made the field by right while Essex's Del Harris was brought in last week to replace Canada's Jonathon Power, the world No 3 who has a torn ankle ligament. Jansher Khan, of Pakistan, returns to defend the title he won last year while Australia are represented by world champion Rodney Eyles and the world No 8, Anthony Hill.

Table tennis

Terry Young was the only English qualifier out of three to join the England No 1, Matthew Syed, in the Qatar Open Championships in Doha yesterday. Young reached the main men's singles competition by beating Nazal Huq, of Bangladesh, and Mohammed Rumehi, of Qatar, before overcoming Denmark's Mads Sorensen 21-19 15-21 21-16.

Tennis

Andre Agassi will represent the United States in its first-round Davis Cup World Group match against Russia. The three-day event will be held from 3 to 5 April at the International Tennis Center at Stone Mountain, Georgia, near Atlanta.

GUARDIAN DIRECT CUP (Battersea Park, London) Singles, first round: K Kucera (Sloven) bt G Raoux (Fr) 6-7 7-6 6-4; F Dewulf (Bel) bt O Blanco (Sp) 6-2 7-5; C Pioline (Fr) bt F Clavet (Sp) 6-1 7-6; P Korda (Cz Rep) bt D Prinosil (Ger) 7-6 6-7 6-4; M Gustafsson (Swe) bt B Steven (NZ) 6-7 7-6 6-2; Y Kafelnikov (Rus) bt T Johansson (Swe) 6-3 6-2.

ADVANTA CHAMPIONSHIPS (Philadelphia) Singles, first round: G Stafford (SA) bt R Fromberg (Aus) 7-6 7-6; T Martin (US) bt B Black (Zim) 6-4 7-6; M Safin (Rus) bt W Black (Zim) 6-1 2-6 6-3; S Lareau (Can) bt T Nydahl (Swe) 6-4 6-3; F Meligeni (Br) bt J A Viloca (Sp) 7-6 6-5; A Gaudenzi (It) bt O Sanguinetti (It) 4-6 6-4 6-3.

WTA TOUR (Linz, Aut) First round: L Raymond (US) bt M Sanchez-Lorenzo (Sp) 6-2 6-3; A Gersi (Cz Rep) bt K Habsudova (Slovak) 7-6 ret; S Farina (It) bt Y Basuki (Indon) 6-3 6-4; A Mauresmo (Fr) bt A Carlsson (Swe) 6-0 7-6; M Maleeva (Bul) bt A Glass (Ger) 6-1 6-0.

Little goes after Ellis summons

Football

By Catherine Riley and Chris Maume

BRIAN LITTLE'S troubled season with Aston Villa came to a premature and sensational end yesterday when he left his post as the club's manager.

Although it was first announced that Little had gone voluntarily, it later emerged that he may have been forced into resigning by the Villa chairman, Doug Ellis, who has sometimes enjoyed less than cordial relations with the procession of managers during his 23-year tenure at Villa Park and has earned the nickname of "Deadly".

Ellis read out a prepared statement yesterday evening, which was more telling for the things it did not mention. The Villa chairman did not say he made any attempt to persuade Little to stay. "I am sad and disappointed to announce that Brian Little has resigned as manager of Aston Villa forthwith," Ellis said.

"We are in the process of securing the services of another team manager, but in the meantime Allan Evans and the coaching staff of Kevin MacDonald, Tony McAndrew, Malcolm Beard and Paul Barron will be in charge. We wish Brian the best of luck in whatever he chooses to do in the future."

Ellis met Little early yesterday morning at the club's training ground, although it was thought that the chairman's main reason for being there was to have treatment on an injury he sustained playing tennis.

Later, Little turned up at Villa Park for an interview and at that point was apparently unaware of a summons from Ellis. He apologised to the journalist upon his arrival at Villa Park, saying he would be 30 minutes late for their talk.

When he did reappear, he was grim-faced and refused to answer any questions about what had happened in the meeting with Ellis, other than to say that any other comments would have to come from the chairman. He immediately left Villa Park, apparently shocked by the morning's events. Ellis also declined to make any further comment.

Little's departure comes after Villa's 2-1 defeat at Wimbledon on Saturday, which left the club 15th in the Premier League and facing a Uefa Cup quarter-final first leg at Atletico Madrid next Thesday.

Only on Monday evening Little had received a standing ovation from a meeting of shareholders after he had a long and frank discussion with Villa supporters concerned about the club's position.

Last night, the chairman of the Aston Villa Shareholders' Association, Buck Chinn, said: "I feel very much that he has been hounded out and has not received the support he deserved from the club. Last night he spoke to a shareholders' association meeting and sat down to a standing ovation. He answered questions for over two hours. He needn't have, he could have refused. But he spoke frankly and openly about the club and his feelings here. I am completely shocked. I had no indication that this was going to happen."

Two former Villa players, Bruce Rioch and David Platt, head the list of possible candidates to succeed Little – himself a former player at the club – as manager. Rioch, a former Villa captain, has been out of the game since he was sacked as assistant manager of Queen's Park Rangers in November. He proved his managerial credentials during stints at Middlesbrough and Bolton, and in his one season with Arsenal, he took them into Europe.

Platt, a former England captain, knows that his days as a player at Highbury are coming to an end. The midfielder was linked with Southampton in the summer, but a return to the West Midlands for him would prove popular with Villa fans, especially as he was the inspiration behind the side which finished second in the League in 1990.

Ruud Gullit will presumably be looking for a new club after his recent acrimonious split with Chelsea, but his wage demands could prove a potential stumbling block. However, he was the popular choice of shocked fans congregating outside Villa Park last night.

Walter Smith, who is leaving Rangers in the summer, has expressed a desire to manage in the Premiership and may have the right credentials for Ellis. Villa, though, would have to wait until the end of the season to secure his services, which may count against him.

John Toshack has long been touted for a return to the English game after his success in the League with Swansea City. The former Real Madrid coach, who had a short spell in charge of Wales, is currently managing the Turkish side Besiktas, but could be persuaded to return to Britain.

Little: Standing ovation

Steve Bruce is another possible candidate as, like Platt, he is a player nearing the end of his career and looking to enter management. The former Manchester United defender is set to agree a new deal with Birmingham, but would surely be interested in a club of the stature of Villa.

Glenn Moore, page 27

Injury puts Fowler's World Cup in doubt

By Glenn Moore

GLENN HODDLE last night offered a message of hope to Robbie Fowler as the Liverpool striker prepared for surgery after suffering a severe knee injury during Monday night's Premiership match with Everton.

The England coach insisted Fowler was still in his World Cup plans, despite fears from his club that he will be out until September after tearing the medial ligaments and damaging the cartilage in his left knee.

Fowler was injured in a last-minute collision with the Everton goalkeeper, Thomas Myhre. He is currently in hospital and will be operated on once the swelling subsides.

"I knew it was serious when I saw the incident on television last night," Hoddle said. "It is sad and wretched luck for Robbie, especially as he has worked extremely hard to recover his form in recent games. He reacted absolutely as I hoped to his exclusion from the squad.

"John Gorman [Hoddle's assistant] has spoken to his father and I am looking forward to speaking to Robbie myself. We all wish him well. If the operation is as successful as we hope it will be and he recovers quickly, we believe he still might be available for the summer."

That must, however, be unlikely as Fowler may need two operations and will then need to gain both fitness and justify a place in the squad. So far, Hoddle has only picked him twice and, although he scored both times, he was left out of the squad for the recent match with Chile.

Only in November, he marked his second England start under the current coach by scoring in the 2-0 Wembley win over Cameroon, but since then he has found the net just five times in 16 games for Liverpool, failing to score a single Premiership goal in 1998.

Fowler, bitterly disappointed at being left out of the Chile squad, hoped to prove his point to Hoddle, although his lack of fortune in front of goal has continued.

Fowler was also capped five times under the previous England manager, Terry Venables, although his international career began as part of England's Under-18 European Championship-winning team in 1993, when he ended up leading scorer with five goals. He scored on his B-team debut against the Republic of Ireland in 1994. He made his full debut in March 1996, coming on for the last 14 minutes against Bulgaria.

However, Fowler's international career looked to be in jeopardy when he fell out with Hoddle last May by dropping out of the England squads to meet South Africa and Poland, and also pulled out of the side to play in France's *Le Tournoi* in order to undergo and operation on his adenoids.

Hoddle questioned why Fowler could not have had the operation earlier in the season while he was suspended, and said at the time: "This could cost Robbie Fowler a place in the World Cup squad."

Hoddle does have alternatives, but with Chris Sutton having ruled himself out, Les Ferdinand perpetually injured and Ian Wright also having problems with form and fitness, they are diminishing, despite the emergence of Fowler's Anfield strike partner, Michael Owen.

This may open the door for Coventry's Dion Dublin, who made his international debut against Chile, Andy Cole, currently in form for Manchester United and even Paul Merson, who has been rejuvenated since his move from Arsenal to Middlesbrough.

Liverpool's problems are more acute. The point from the draw with Everton left them in joint second place with Arsenal in the league, but with the loss of Fowler, their attacking options are limited to just Owen, who their manager, Roy Evans, was hoping to be able to rest, and Karlheinz Riedle. Evans may have to buy to maintain their challenge for both the Championship and a Champions' League place.

The possibility of returning as a third-choice striker will further depress Fowler during the long and painful rehabilitation process. He has also faced problems off the field as well, with reports – fiercely denied – that he had been the subject of blackmail attempts and other suggestions that he was demanding a huge pay increase to £50,000 a week during his current negotiations for a new contract to replace the one which expires next summer.

But now any chance he had of earning a place on the flight to France seems to have disappeared with an injury which saw him pay the price for not giving up on a lost cause.

Liverpool's Robbie Fowler receives treatment after suffering a serious knee injury against Everton at Anfield on Monday

Photograph: Martin Birchall/Liverpool Post and Echo

£3m Balbo may join Vialli

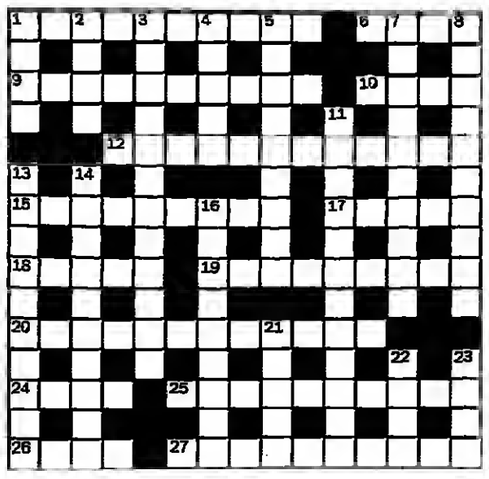
ABEL BALBO, Roma's Argentinian striker, could be heading to Stamford Bridge to join Gianluca Vialli's new-look Chelsea side next season. *Corriere dello Sport* says Roma are ready to sell the 31-year-old former international for £3m.

The Arsenal manager, Arsène Wenger, said yesterday that although he may buy again this season, especially if Southampton's Kevin Davies and Metz's Robert Pires become available, he is close to the side he wants.

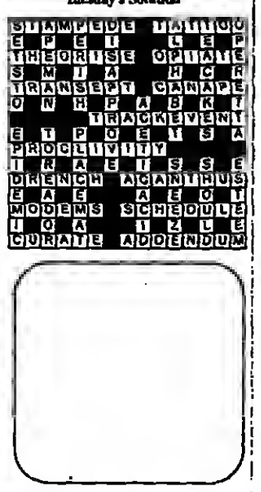
"We do not need much more to make us a very good side," the Frenchman said. "The next two and a half months will really show how good we are."

THE INDEPENDENT CROSSWORD

No. 3542. Wednesday 25 February — By Aquila



Tuesday's Solution



ACROSS

1 Edwin slows, cycling without lights (10)
6 Helping of Christmas pudding for King Edward? (4)
9 Rod, in a cell, involved in moving characters on (10)
10 Blast, perhaps, from copper vessel (4)
12 The Haydn symphony driving hamsters loco? (12)
15 To make fresh point, raise tone once again (8)
17 Given rough coat of plaster that is pitched (5)
18 Rough cider called (5)
19 Biting trendy starters with delight (9)
20 Minnesota cop making amends (12)
24 Sex for breakfast? (4)
25 Craft of some slick escapes? (3-7)
26 Axe and rifle (4)
27 Limited scope with reduced balance (5-5)

DOWN

1 Central band in Tallow, an old village (4)
2 Informer in northern safe place (4)
3 Commend a fine novel — one about two itinerant farmworkers (2,4,3,3)
4 Lady-love thrown over by cowboy? (5)
5 Doctor, long in spiritualist's meeting, makes appearance (9)
7 Chicken-farmer may run plot differently (10)
8 Tired out breaking records, mistrusts the result (10)
11 Proof of earnings from The Wind in the Willows? (4,8)
13 Ahead in development of firm in valued environment (10)
14 Magi static, unfortunately, with eye trouble (10)
16 K-news agency in opium deal (9)
21 Small child given a long sum (5)
22 Old Chester seen in Whitsuntide vacation (4)
23 Man, say, lies when in trouble (4)

©Published by Newspaper Publishing PLC, 1 Canada Square, Canary Wharf, London E14 5DL, and printed at Mirror Colour Print, St Albans Road, Watford
Back issues available from Historic Newspapers, 01988 840370.
Wednesday 25 February 1998 Registered as a newspaper with the Post Office

Ashton abandons Ireland to their fate

Rugby union

By Tim Glover

BRIAN ASHTON has resigned as coach of Ireland, a couple of weeks into an increasingly fragmented and fractious Five Nations' Championship.

Less than 12 months after signing a six-year contract, the 50-year-old Lancastrian has had enough of what looks like an unfair struggle in the Fair City.

"I have decided to resign, with regret, for personal reasons," Ashton said. Under his charge, Ireland have won only one Five Nations match, beating Wales in Cardiff last season, but the Englishman had to stomach a record 46-6 defeat to England in Dublin. The Irish lost to New Zealand and Italy and, two weeks ago, opened the Championship with a defeat by Scotland at Lansdowne Road. It has left the Irish with the prospect of the wooden spoon and they already have a drawer full of them.

Since losing to Scotland, Ashton has been suffering from shingles and was unable to supervise the national squad last week.

The appointment of Ashton, especially on a long-term contract, appeared to be something of a coup for the Irish. In 1989 the schoolteacher teamed up with Jack Rowell at Bath and together they turned the club into the most successful in England. League and Cup doubles were their speciality.

When Rowell took over the England job in 1994, Ashton was promoted and he and Bath resumed normal service, maintaining a phenomenal run of success. Despite the fact that he is hugely rated in the game, England, after parting company with Rowell, made no move for Ashton.

Since rugby went professional in 1995, Ireland, Wales and Scotland have struggled to keep in touch with England and France. One of the reasons is that many of the leading Celts have been recruited to England's Premiership in which the standards and competition, as well as salaries, are higher.

Ashton had bases in Ireland and the West Country and felt the need to commute back and forth across the Irish Sea. It is understood he became disillusioned with the task and he did not exactly get on with Pat Whelan, the team manager, like a house on fire. "I'm English, Pat's Irish. I'm a professional, he's an amateur," Ashton remarked recently. He was seeking more autonomy from the Irish Rugby Football Union, who make the manager, rather than the coach, ultimately accountable for the performances of the team. Ashton wanted the authority to comment on team selection and more say in the awarding of players' contracts.

It is understood that although his contract required him to serve six months' notice, the IRFU waived it. Niall Brophy, the IRFU president, said: "The Union regrets Brian Ashton's resignation. I thank him for his contribution to Irish rugby and wish him well."

For rugby coach, read soccer manager; the job is becoming increasingly precarious. Scotland have already dispensed with Richie Dixon and David Johnston and last week Leicester sacked Bob Dwyer and London Irish removed Willie Anderson.

It is possible that Leicester are interested in Ashton and Ireland in Anderson although the word in Dublin is that the front-runners are the New Zealander Warren Gatland and the Welshman Mike Ruddock. Gatland, an understudy of the All Blacks hooker Sean Fitzpatrick, brought the best out of Connacht in the European Conference and Ruddock has made a favourable impression with Leinster.

Sympathy for Ashton has been tempered by the timing of his departure – Ireland face an exceptional French team in Paris on Saturday week and are not given a prayer.

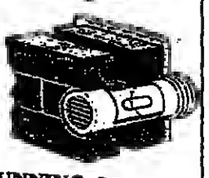
RISING DAMP? CONDENSATION?
Talk to the specialists

Wallguard understand damp.
Our specialist surveyors will tell you where the problem lies – and recommend our best solution.

TACKLE DAMP WITH WALLGUARD

1 If rising damp is your problem the patented Wallguard Ceramic Tube System will tackle it. The neat, unobtrusive ceramic tubes are usually fitted outside so internal walls and decorations are not disturbed. The system has been in use in Westminster Abbey since 1932!

2 Condensation in individual rooms is dealt with by the patented Wallguard Trickle Ventilator. It takes the damp vapours through the wall to discharge harmlessly into the outside air – without causing draughts or heat loss.



NO MAINTENANCE, NO RUNNING COSTS & ENVIRONMENTALLY FRIENDLY.

ISO9002
The quality management system of Wallguard has been assessed and granted approval to the requirements of BSEN ISO9002 which relates to site surveys and the installation of Damp Proofing systems.

Local Authority & Building Society Approved
WALLGUARD
YOU'RE HOME AND DRY
NO DEPOSIT - FINANCE DETAILS ON REQUEST.
For further details or to arrange for a survey
PHONE FREE on 0800 508608
or use the coupon, there's no postage to pay.
Send to Wallguard Limited, Freepost MR 8787 Manchester M16 8HB
E-Mail sales@wallguard.co.uk http://www.wallguard.co.uk
Available throughout the E.E.C.

☐ I need a damp proof course survey ☐ I have a damp problem
☐ I have a condensation problem ☐ I would like to see the Wallguard video
Name
Telephone I.9
Address
Postcode
Send to: WALLGUARD LTD, FREEPOST MR 8787, MANCHESTER M16 8HB.

هكذا من الاصل